

ESSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1. Essington Parish Council (the Council) aims to provide services at a satisfactory level. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
- 1.2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about the Council's administration and procedures and may include complaints about how the Council's employees have dealt with your concerns.
- 1.3. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints made against the Council's employees but does not apply to:
 - 1.3.1. Complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures
 - 1.3.2. Complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of South Staffordshire Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of South Staffordshire Council.
- 1.4. The appropriate time for influencing the Council's decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the Public Forum section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. The Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.
- 2.2. In dealing with complaints the Council and its employees will comply with data protection legislation and the Council's policy thereon.
- 2.3. In dealing with complaints the Council and its employees will comply with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

3. PROCEDURE

- 3.1. You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. All formal complaints against the Council must be communicated in writing (which

includes by email) and must state whether the complainant wishes their complaint to be treated confidentially. Complaints should be sent to Essington Parish Council, Essington Community Centre, Hobnock Road, Essington WS11 2RF marked for the attention of the Parish Clerk.

- 3.2. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint immediately. If the Clerk is absent when a complaint is made, the complaint will be dealt with immediately upon the Clerk's return from absence.
- 3.3. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of Essington Parish Council ("the Chairman") who will report your complaint to the Council. Complaints should be sent to Essington Parish Council, Essington Community Centre, Hobnock Road, Essington WS11 2RF marked for the attention of the Chairman of the Council and marked "Addressee Only".
- 3.4. Wherever possible, the Chairman will try to resolve the complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Chairman will normally try to acknowledge the complaint immediately. If the Chairman is absent when a complaint is made, the complaint will be dealt with immediately upon the Chairman's return from absence.
- 3.5. The Clerk or the Chairman as appropriate will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant and / or from staff or members of the Council.
- 3.6. The Clerk or the Chairman will notify the complainant within 20 working days of the outcome of the complaint and of what action, if any, the Council proposes to take as a result of the complaint. (In exceptional cases the 20 working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, the complainant will be kept informed in writing.)

4. APPEALS

- 4.1. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Council and usually within eight weeks you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

5. REVIEWS

- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed three years from the date of adoption by Essington Parish Council.

Approved: 01 March 2021

Review date: March 2024