

Goring on Thames Parish Council

Complaints Policy

1. This policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that a person other than a member of the council may have about Goring on Thames Parish Council's administration and procedures. It applies to Parish Council's employees. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the council and published as an appendix to Standing Orders and Regulations. Formal complaints of conduct by councillors should be made to and investigated by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Complaints against policy decisions made by the council or any of its committees shall be referred to council in accordance with paragraph 31 of the council's standing orders, which provides as follows:

- a) A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the council may be reversed or amended only after the elapse of six months or as provided for in sub-paragraph (c) of this order or by the passing of a special resolution, the written notice of which bears the names of at least one-third of the members of the council or by motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.
 - b) When a special resolution or any other motion moved under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this standing order has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months, unless the chairman decide otherwise.
 - c) A person who is not a member of the council who is affected by the decision of a committee may appeal to the full council to have that decision reviewed and, if the council sees fit, reversed or amended. The decision of the council on that appeal will be final.
2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the council's employees is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk to the council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk to the council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
 3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk of the council, they should be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
 4. Procedures
 - a) On receipt of a written complaint the chairman of the council or the clerk to the council (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them a

opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

- b) Where the clerk to the council receives a written complaint about the clerk to the council's own actions, they shall refer the complaint to the chairman of council. The clerk to the council shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
5. The clerk to the council or chairman of council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the council. The clerk to the council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter be related to grievance, disciplinary or standard board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under confidential business to exclude any member of the public or the press or deferred on appropriate advice received).
 6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
 7. As soon as practicable after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
 8. A council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law and practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.