

# St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Parish Council

---

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY** (Last review: 01/05/20 Next review: 2022)

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. A good complaints system should be:
- Well publicised and easy to use
  - Fair and objective
  - Based on clear procedures and defined responsibilities
  - Thorough, rigorous and consistent
  - Decisive and capable of putting things right where necessary
  - Sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the complainant
  - Adequately resourced
  - Fully supported by councillors and officers
  - Regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for improvement

### **2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- 2.1 The complainant must set out his / her complaint in writing to the Chair / Chairman. If the complaint is about the Chair / Chairman, the complaint should be sent to the Vice Chair / Chairman instead who will decide whether the Parish Council can deal with the complaint or whether it should be investigated by an independent panel of members.
- 2.2 If the complaint cannot be resolved quickly and informally, the Chair / Chairman will appoint a panel of three members to investigate it.
- 2.3 Once the panel has had a reasonable opportunity to consider its response to the information provided, the complaint will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.
- 2.4 Meetings will normally be convened within ten working days of the Parish Council receiving written notification of the complaint.
- 2.5 The complainant has the right to be accompanied by a representative to the meeting.
- 2.6 If the meeting is inconvenient for either the complainant or his / her representative, they have the right to reschedule the meeting by up to five working days to a mutually agreeable time and date.
- 2.7 A complaint meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be further investigated or to afford the panel time to consider their decision.

- 2.8 The findings of the panel will be reported to the Chair / Chairman then discussed at the next scheduled Parish Council meeting. The complainant can attend that meeting and has the right to be accompanied by a representative. Members of the public will be excluded from this part of the meeting under Council Standing Order 3(d) due to the confidential nature of the discussions.
- 2.9 After the findings have been ratified or amended at the Parish Council meeting, the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing within five working days.
- 2.10 If the complainant wishes to appeal against the result, he / she must inform the Parish Council in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the decision.
- 2.11 If the complainant notifies the Parish Council that they wish to appeal, the Chair / Chairman will appoint a new panel with three independent members to investigate it.
- 2.12 If the appeal meeting is inconvenient for either the complainant or his / her representative, they have the right to reschedule the meeting by up to five working days to a mutually agreeable time and date.
- 2.13 After the appeal meeting the complainant will be informed of the Parish Council's final decision in writing within five working days.