

Complaints Procedure

East Lavington Parish Council is committed to providing its services efficiently and to as high a standard as possible. However, we do encourage individuals to bring shortcomings to our notice so that we may:

- have the opportunity to resolve your issue
- learn from our mistakes so that they may be prevented in future
- review policies and procedures where necessary

We take all complaints very seriously and it will depend on the type of complaint as to how it is handled. We categorize them into three types of complaint, namely:

- an employee
- a Councillor
- administration and procedures

This policy sets out the procedures for dealing with complaints by members of the public about East Lavington Parish Council.

- 1) The Council will deal with complaints about the Council **employees** internally as an employment matter. Any complaint about a Council employee (the Clerk is currently the only employee) should be put in writing to the Chairman of the Council. The matter will then be dealt with internally and appropriate action taken.
- 2) All Councillors sign up to the Code of Conduct as part of their declarations of acceptance of office. Complaints about **Councillors** should be addressed to: The Monitoring Officer, Community Engagement, Chichester District Council, East Pallant House, 1 East Pallant, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1TY. Telephone: 01243 534864. Email: community@chichester.gov.uk
- 3) Complaints about **procedures or administration** should be discussed with the Clerk who is also the Proper Officer of the Council. Mistakes and misunderstandings are often resolved informally at this stage. The complaint should be put in writing to the Clerk and the Council will discuss it at the next Parish Council Meeting.

However, if the Clerk cannot resolve the concern or issue to your satisfaction, please follow the steps detailed below.

For further information please contact Amy Harte, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for East Lavington Parish Council

Tel: 01798 342568 Email: eastlavingtonpc@gmail.com
South Side, Dye House Lane, Duncton, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0LF

- a) Please put your complaint in writing (email is preferred, but postal is acceptable, see details below) to the Clerk, detailing the procedure or administration you wish to complain about. If you do not wish to send the complaint to the Clerk it may be sent to the Chairman.
- b) The Clerk or Chairman shall acknowledge the receipt of your complaint in writing within 3 working days and advise you of the date of the meeting when the Council will consider the matter.
- c) You will be invited to attend the meeting and may bring with you such representatives as you wish.
- d) At least 7 clear days before the meeting, you will need to provide East Lavington Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which you may wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council will similarly provide you with copies of any documentation upon which you may wish to rely at the meeting.
- e) The Council shall consider whether the nature of the complaint warrants the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting. Any decisions on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
- f) The following procedure will be followed:-
 - i. The Chairman will introduce everyone.
 - ii. The Chairman will explain the procedure.
 - iii. You will be asked to outline the grounds of your complaint.
 - iv. If relevant, the Clerk will explain East Lavington Parish Council's position.
 - v. Councillors will then have the opportunity to question you and the Clerk.
 - vi. You and the Clerk will then be offered the opportunity of any last words.
 - vii. You and the Clerk will be asked to leave the room whilst the Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made, (if a point of clarification is necessary, both parties are to be invited back).
 - viii. You and the Clerk return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.
- g) The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
- h) If you wish to appeal against the decision, you must inform East Lavington Parish Council, in writing, within 7 working days of the written confirmation of the decision.

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- i) The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your request for an appeal within 48 hours and advise you when the matter will be re-considered by the Council.
- j) You will be invited to attend the appeal meeting and may bring with you a maximum of 2 representatives.
- k) The appeal meeting will follow the same procedure as detailed in (f), providing you with the opportunity to explain your grounds for the appeal.
- l) After the appeal, East Lavington Parish Council will confirm its final decision in writing within 7 working days, together with details of any action to be taken.
- m) If you have exhausted East Lavington Parish Council's complaints procedure and are not satisfied with the action taken, or believe that you have been unfairly treated, then you can pursue your complaint through the Ombudsman, who provides an independent national service to investigate complaints about councils.

Local Government Ombudsman details

Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

There is a form on the website that can be completed online.

Last reviewed May 2016