

# **Horrabridge Parish Council Complaints Policy & Procedure**

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the NALC Legal Topic Note 09, dated June 2014. Although the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in general has no jurisdiction in respect of local councils it is recommended by NALC that local councils document a complaints procedure.

Horrabridge Parish 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. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council services, administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- 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.
- Complaints against Councillors. Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members as adopted by the Council and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of West Devon Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of West Devon Borough Council.
- Complaints about democratic decisions taken by the Council decided by a vote.

The appropriate time for influencing Council 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 participation 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 including as regards subsequent consideration by committee.

## Procedure

For concerns, other than those listed above for which separate arrangements apply, in the first instance you should draw the attention of the Clerk to the subject of your concern.

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive from the Clerk you may make your formal complaint to the Clerk. If your complaint is about the Clerk you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council. Contact details are available on the website.

Wherever possible, the Clerk, or Chairman, will try to resolve your complaint promptly and will normally acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days.

The Clerk or Chairman of the Council will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council. This could include a meeting with you as the complainant.

The Clerk or Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to an Appeals Panel of the Parish Council and, usually within 20 working days, you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

In the event of vexatious, unreasonable or malicious complaints the Council reserves the right, having requested the complainant desist from the inappropriate action, to cease communication with the complainant.

Signed:..... Chairman