

## **DORCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Dorchester Parish Council's administration and procedures. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council with the proviso that issues shall not be reopened for six months.

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 to the Council he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.

4. a) On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman of Council or the Clerk to the Council (except where the complainant 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 him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage. b) Where the Clerk to the Council or the Chairman of Council receives a written complaint about the Clerk's own actions, this matter will be dealt with by 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 report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

6. 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 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.

7. 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.

8. As soon as may be after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

9. The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

10. Review of the policy - this policy was accepted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 11th October 2023 and will be reviewed annually.