

Appendix 1 – Procedure for Resolving Formal Complaints

Submitting the Complaint

1. Grayshott Parish Council requires that formal complaints are directed to the Clerk in writing giving full details of the complaint and clearly labelled as a complaint. If possible, the complaint should include details of any dates/times, references to Council minutes, details of staff or councillors concerned and your contact details. If the complaint is about the Clerk, you may direct your complaint to any councillor or to the Clerk.

Receipt of the Complaint

2. The receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. In general, the names of those who will be investigating the complaint will also be included. If additional information is needed before assigning council members to the Investigation Panel, that information will be requested in that acknowledgement. Within 3 working days of receiving that information, the complainant will be informed in writing the names of those who will be investigating.

Investigation of the Complaint

3. The aim is that all formal complaints are fully investigated within 4 weeks with a written response then being sent. If the complaint is particularly complicated or there is insufficient time to gather information needed then the Council reserves the right to extend the 4-week period but will notify complainant of this in writing. The Investigation Panel will also contact the complainant during this 4-week period should they require more information; however, the 4-week period will be extended should a longer period be needed to investigate any new information provided. In all cases, Grayshott Parish Council will endeavour to resolve all formal complaints as quickly as possible.
4. The goal of Grayshott Parish Council is to try to keep open the lines of communication with the complainant by providing appropriate support, which includes clarifying the reason for the outcome; offering relevant support for a complainant with any special needs; suggesting an independent representative to help present their case.
5. Any action taken as a result of a proven persistent and/or vexatious complaint will be proportionate to the degree of annoyance/aggravation caused.

The Investigation Procedure

6. The Chair or Vice Chair will lead the investigation into the complaint along with two other councillors appointed by the Chair/Vice Chair (“the Investigation Panel”). In

some cases, the Chair/Vice Chair may choose to delegate the Clerk to lead the investigation depending on the nature of the complaint.

7. In all cases, the complaint will be held in confidence and adhere to current data protection guidelines so the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed unless they choose to waive their right to anonymity. The Investigation Panel may contact the complainant for further information or invite them to attend a meeting for further discussion. The complainant will be invited to bring a friend/representative with them to this meeting.
8. Once the investigation is complete, the complainant will be informed in writing if their complaint has been upheld or dismissed. The complainant will be informed about the reasons for the decision along with details of any action the Council will take. The appeals procedure will also be outlined in this letter.

Appeals Procedure

9. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they should put their concerns in writing to the Council and it will be considered by three different councillors ("the Appeal Panel"). These will be councillors who were not involved in the original complaint. The Clerk may be asked to investigate if appropriate.
10. The Appeal Panel will look at all the information relating to the complaint and may contact the complainant for further information or invite them to attend a meeting for further discussion. The complainant will be invited to bring a friend/representative with them to this meeting.
11. The Appeal Panel will notify the complainant of its decision within 4 weeks.