

# BUXHALL PARISH COUNCIL

## CODE OF PRACTICE IN HANDLING COMPLAINTS

From time-to-time members of the public may have complaints about the administration or procedures of a parish, town or community council. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff affecting one or more members of the public.

Buxhall Parish Council will normally try and resolve complaints in an informal manner. However, if this is not acceptable to the complainant then the formal complaints procedure below will be followed.

Any person wishing to make a complaint against a Parish Councillor where there is perceived to be a breach of The Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007, particularly the sections dealing with Prejudicial Interest, should put their complaint in writing to:

Kathryn Saward  
The Monitoring Officer  
Mid Suffolk District Council  
High Street  
Needham Market  
Ipswich IP6 8DL

For other complaints Buxhall Parish Council has a standard formal procedure for considering complaints that is recommended for transparency in local government and as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that at the very least their complaint has been properly and fully considered.

### **Procedure.**

1. All complaints about the Council's procedures or administration should be made in writing to the Clerk of the Council.
2. If the complainant does not wish to write to the Clerk the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman.
3. The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman shall enter all complaints in the Complaints Log Book and bring any written complaint to the next meeting of the Council.
4. The Clerk to the Council shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the Council will consider the matter.
5. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representation as they wish.
6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.
7. **At the meeting** the Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and the public. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at a council meeting in public.
8. The Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
9. The complainant shall be asked to outline the grounds for complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by the Clerk or nominated officer and then members.
10. The Clerk or other nominated officer shall, if relevant, explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and members.

11. The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
12. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant shall be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. If clarification on a point is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
13. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant shall return to hear the decision or be advised when the decision will be made.
14. The complainant will be advised in writing of the result of the Council's findings within seven working days of the decision.

In the event of serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the Council shall consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to the complainant.

*Approved by the Council at its meeting held on*

*BPC Complaints Version 1*