

SLYNE WITH HEST PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE IN HANDLING COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST THE COUNCIL

(Note: Complaints made against individual councillors are dealt with by the Standards Committee under the Council's Code of Conduct and complaints against the clerk are dealt with through employment procedures)

The procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the clerk or other proper officer or chairman.

At all times, the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council. If circumstances warrant the setting up of separate committee to hear the complaint, the council shall under its Standing Order (8(h)) establish a committee for this purpose at the earliest opportunity.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven (7) 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.

At the Meeting

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press and invoke the council's Standing Order (16) if necessary. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
15. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken

This Code of Practice was adopted by Slyne with Hest Parish Council at its meeting held on Monday 18 February 2008 (Minute Ref. 1059)

Based on recommendations made by NALC