

Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council (adopted meeting held 1/10/07 minute no.78)

Complaints procedure

At Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council, we want to ensure that all those who come into contact with us are dealt with efficiently, with courtesy and understanding.

A complaint will usually be about something you think we have done the wrong way, something we should not have done, or something we failed to do.

In the event that you should wish to make a comment or complaint, please follow the steps below.

Informal Stage

Talk to any member of the Parish Council or the Clerk. Most problems are dealt with at this level and brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Your complaint will be recorded in the complaints book, so that the Council can monitor its performance against this code of practice, and to ensure that we put right anything the Council is doing wrong.

Formal Stage

Stage 1

Complaints may be made by letter, fax, e-mail, telephone, in person or by using the special form available from the Clerk. We will let you have a written response within seven working days of receiving your complaint

The investigation may take longer than 7 working days. If this is the case we will let you know the reason for the delay and let you know when you will receive a response.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the way in which your complaint was handled or the decision that was made, you should let us know by writing to the Chairman. In the letter you should let us know why you were not satisfied with either the way we handled your complaint at Stage 1 or the response we gave you. The Chairman will review the Stage 1 investigation and you will hear from them within seven working days of receiving your letter.

The purpose of Stage 2 is to ensure that everything you raised in your original complaint has been looked at in detail and correctly addressed and, if not, to make sure that this now happens. The investigation may take longer than 7 working days. If this is the case we will let you know the reason for the delay and let you know when you will receive a response. If you are still not satisfied with the response you can ask for a further investigation, see Stage 3.

Stage 3

You should write to the Chairman asking for a further review of your complaint. In the letter you should let us know why you were not satisfied with either the way we handled your complaint

at Stage 1 or Stage 2, or the responses we gave you. The Chairman will review the responses given to you at Stages 1 and 2 and make any further enquiries and investigations that are necessary, in order to provide a response within seven working days. The investigation may take longer than 7 working days. If this is the case we will let you know the reason for the delay and let you know when you will receive a response.

If you ask us to deal with an issue that does not fall within our complaints procedure we will let you know what other options may be available to you. If you have difficulties in making a complaint or receiving a response at any stage of the procedure we will be pleased to help you in any way we can. Please call 01621 772498 for assistance

Local Government Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with the way the Council has handled your complaint, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is an independent government-appointed representative who will act as an impartial investigator. The Ombudsman will usually advise you that the complainant should have gone through the Council's 3 stages before he will investigate.

The service is free (and confidential) and is fully described in a separate leaflet entitled "How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman". Copies of this leaflet are available free of charge from:

Local Government Ombudsman
10th Floor, Millbank Tower,
Millbank,
London,
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 020 7217 4620

Fax: 020 7217 4621

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council

Complaint form

You are encouraged to fill in this form and return it to the address at the bottom of the form. Please help us to help you by giving as much information as you can. Continue on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form.

Your details (Your details will not be given to the public or press)

Mr/Mrs/Miss (please circle appropriately) or Other (please state)

First name (BLOCK letters)

Surname (BLOCK letters)

Your address

.....
.....
.....

Postcode

Daytime telephone no

Evening telephone no

Email address

Your complaint

What do you think we have done wrong or failed to do? (It would be helpful, although not essential, if you could include dates and names of people involved with this matter)

Background to your complaint

Have you already complained to the Council? Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)

If yes

(a) who did you complained to?

(b) on what date did you complain?

(c) was your complaint made in writing? Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)

(d) have you received a written reply? Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)

Putting matters right

How do you think we can put matters right for you? Be as specific as you can.

Do you need help?

If there is anything, which makes it difficult for you to use our complaints' procedure, for example, English, is not your first language or you have a disability, please use the space below to tell us how we might help you.

Your signature

Date

Please return this form to The Clerk, Asheldham and Dengie Parish Council, 16 Homefield, Southminster, Essex CM0 7ED