

Thorrington Parish Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Thorrington Parish Council is committed to providing high quality services that meet the needs of people living and working within our area. If you are unhappy about the action, or lack of action, of this Council or are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you can complain to us and how we shall try to resolve it. We take all complaints seriously and are keen to resolve your problem. This feedback provides us with valuable information on our performance and assists in our continuing aim to be a top performing Council.

WHEN IS IT APPLICABLE?

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's Grievance Policy.
- Complaints against a Councillor. These are covered in the Code of Conduct for Members and you may contact the Monitoring Officer for Tending District Council, who will decide if further action is necessary.

ALLEGATIONS OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITY

Local electors may object to the Council's Annual Accounts. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, s.17c there are two grounds for an objection:

- that an item is unlawful; or
- there is something in the accounts that the auditor should tell the public about in a public interest report. Please contact the Council's external auditor, Littlejohn LLP, 1 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, E14 4HD.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Please contact the Police on 101.

IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH A COUNCIL DECISION

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by:

- writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed.
- raising your concerns during the public participation section of the Parish Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council. Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of a decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

HOW WE HANDLE COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint, you should contact the Parish Clerk informally first and ask them to investigate or explain the actions of the Council. The Clerk will liaise with the appropriate person/s who will understand the nature of your complaint and may be better informed to resolve it for you. If, however, your complaint is about the Clerk then please contact the Chairman (contact details below):

MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT – STAGE ONE

Whilst you can make your complaint by any appropriate method, preferably please put your complaint in writing using the Complaints Form attached, with an accompanying letter if you wish to give more details. Send it to the Parish Clerk as detailed above. If you need help completing this form, we can arrange for someone to help you. We will contact you to let you know we have received your complaint within 5 working days. Your complaint will be investigated, and a written response will be sent to you within 10 working days. We will let you know about Stage 2 of the procedure if you are not happy with the response.

ASK FOR A REVIEW OF YOUR COMPLAINT – STAGE TWO If you are not satisfied with how your complaint was handled or the decision made, you should let us know by writing to the Clerk or, where appropriate, 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. We will contact you within 5 working days to let you know we have received your complaint. Three Councillors, with no previous involvement, will review the Stage 1 investigation and you will be sent a written response within 20 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. If it is not possible for three appropriate Councillors to be found, then a Councillor for another Parish Council will be appointed to undertake the review. Please complete in black ink and capital letters. Your details: 1. Name: 2. Address for correspondence: 3. Telephone number (Day): Telephone number (Eve): 4. Email: 5. What do you consider the Council has done wrong or failed to do? 6. How has the problem affected you? 7. What should the Council do to put things right? 8. Who have you spoken to about this and when? Signed: (to be signed by the person making the complaint) Date: If you require assistance in completing the application form or submitting the supporting information, please contact the Parish Clerk. . Return this form, and any accompanying letter or supporting information, to: Lynsey Ritchie-Fagg thoringtonpc@yahoo.com

Policy Adoption Date: 27th March 2024

Policy Review Date: March 2025