

**Westbourne Parish Council**  
**Complaints Procedure**  
**Adopted: 8 September 2016**

N.B. To be used with reference to the National Association of Local Council's Legal Topic Note LTN 9E, Handling Complaints

[http://www.sussexalc.org.uk/nalc\\_legal\\_topic\\_notes\\_2014-06-01-HANDLING-COMPLAINTS.asp](http://www.sussexalc.org.uk/nalc_legal_topic_notes_2014-06-01-HANDLING-COMPLAINTS.asp).

1. Complaints about the Council's procedures or administration must be submitted in writing to the Clerk. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, they are advised to write to the Chairman of the Council.
2. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seven working days and will send a copy of the complaint to the Chairman. The Clerk will ask the complainant if the complaint is to be treated confidentially, and will also outline who will deal with the complaint and provide an estimated timeframe for investigating the complaint.
3. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk or Chairman will contact the complainant directly in an effort to reach an amicable solution to the complaint. They will not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without notifying the person complained of and giving them an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. If the Clerk or the Chairman receives a written complaint about their own actions they will refer the complaint to the Council.
4. The Clerk or Chairman will report any written complaint dealt with by direct action with the complainant at the next Council meeting.
5. If an amicable solution cannot be reached by the above means, the complaint will be considered at the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date of the meeting.
6. If possible, the complaint will be dealt with by consideration of written representations. If this is not possible, both parties to the complaint will be invited to attend in person and they may be accompanied by an adviser/representative.
7. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation to be relied on. The Council will also provide the complainant with copies of any documentation they wish to rely on.
8. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances warrant the matter being discussed with the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
9. Where the complaint is heard in person rather than by written representations, the following procedure will apply:
  - complainant to outline the details of the complaint
  - members to ask any questions of the complainant, and if relevant, the subject of the complaint
  - if relevant, the Clerk will explain the Council's position
  - the subject and the complainant to be offered the last word
  - the complainant and subject withdraw while the Council come to a decision in respect of the complaint
  - the complainant and the subject of the complaint will be invited back into the meeting and advised of the decision.
10. Decision confirmed in writing together with details of any action to be taken.