

## **WEST GRINSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

This code of practice is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of West Grinstead Parish Council (WGPC) or about its procedures. It is designed for those complaints that cannot satisfactorily be dealt with by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Parish Clerk or Chairman of WGPC. This code does not apply to complaints about individual councillors or employees. Details on how to complain about individual councillors or employees can be obtained from the Clerk.

### **BEFORE THE MEETING**

1. The complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Clerk of WGPC.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Chairman of WGPC.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by WGPC.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish or can be reasonably accommodated.
5. At least seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide WGPC with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. WGPC shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation or other evidence upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

### **AT THE MEETING**

6. WGPC shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the WGPC meeting in public.
7. The chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone.
8. The chairman of the meeting shall explain the procedure to be followed for the meeting.
9. The complainant, or their representative, will outline the grounds of their complaint.
10. Members of WGPC shall ask any questions of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Clerk shall explain the position of WGPC.
12. Members of WGPC shall ask any questions of the Clerk.
13. The Clerk and then the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of last words.
14. The Clerk and the complainant shall be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both the Clerk and complainant shall be invited back to the room).
15. The Clerk and complainant will return to hear the decision or be advised when the decision will be made.

### **AFTER THE MEETING**

16. The decision of WGPC will be confirmed to the Clerk and complainant in writing within seven days together with details of any action to be taken.

*Adopted by West Grinstead Parish Council April 2011*