

At Chigwell Parish Council we will try to do all we can to provide high quality public services to the people of Chigwell. But, we do recognise that there may be times when a member of our local community may not be happy with what we are doing.

Telling us when you are not happy is important to us so that we can put things right and then improve the services we provide in the future.

STAGE ONE - PLEASE TALK TO US

- If you have a complaint about the Parish Council's procedures, administration or an employee you can visit the Parish Office which is based in Hainault Road Chigwell. Alternatively, you can contact us by:
 - Telephone - 020 8501 4275
 - E-mail – anthony.belgrave@chigwellparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Every effort will be made to try and resolve your concerns. If, however, you are not happy that your complaint has been addressed you can move to Stage Two of the Complaints Procedure.

STAGE TWO - PLEASE PUT IT IN WRITING

- We will try to do everything we can to resolve your complaint by talking to you. But, if we cannot do this to your satisfaction, you can complete a complaints form (which is available from the Parish Council Office).
- Your completed form should be returned to the Clerk to the Council or to the Chairman of the Council.
- We will send you a written acknowledgement within 7 working days to confirm that your complaint has been received.
- As we may need some time to look into your concerns, we aim to investigate your complaint and send you a full response (outlining the investigation and its results) within 10 working days from our acknowledgement letter. If this is not possible, we will keep you updated on progress throughout our investigation of your complaint.

STAGE THREE - THE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

- If you feel that your complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, Stage Three enables you to submit your concerns to the Parish Council's Complaints Committee.
- We will write to you in 10 working days to offer a date for the Committee to consider your complaint and you will be invited to attend the meeting and bring a representative if you wish. There may be occasions when your complaint will need to be treated as confidential and we will advise you if this is the case.
- You will be asked to provide the Council with copies of any documentation relevant to your complaint 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, and the Council will also provide you with copies of any documentation it feels is relevant within this 7 day period.
- At the meeting itself, the Chairman of the Complaints Committee will introduce everyone and explain the procedure (the meeting will be minuted). A summary of the meeting procedure is set out below:
 - ▶ You or your representative will be invited to outline the grounds for complaint. Questions may be asked by the Clerk to the Council, other nominated officers and then members of the Committee.
 - ▶ The Clerk to the Council, or other nominated officer, will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by you or your representative and members of the Committee.
 - ▶ The Clerk to the Council/nominated officer and you/your representative will then be given the opportunity to summarise your respective positions.
 - ▶ The Clerk/other nominated officer and you/your representative will be asked to leave the room while the Committee decides whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back to the meeting.
- The Complaints Committee will try to reach a decision on the day of the meeting so you will be given the opportunity to wait for the outcome. But, if the decision cannot be made on the day, because of the need for further investigations, we will tell you when it is likely to be made and when you will be informed of the outcome.
- As soon as a decision has been reached we will confirm it in writing to you within 7 working days of the meeting together with details of any action that we will be taking to improve our services.

TAKING YOUR COMPLAINT FURTHER

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over town and parish councils in England. This means that there are no statutory mechanisms in place for complaints to be made against local councils in England. If you would like more information about the Local Government Ombudsman please go to the website www.lgo.org.uk or telephone 0300 061 0614.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF A COUNCILLOR AT CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL

The local standards framework gives councils the responsibility for upholding the ethical behaviour of their councillors. Introduced by Government legislation in 2008, the framework gives authorities the powers to investigate those councillors whose behaviour falls short of the standards expected of them.

Complaints about the behaviour of a Chigwell Parish Councillor must be sent to Epping Forest District Council Standards Committee at the Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ.

You can download a complaints form at:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy/Councillor_Conduct.asp

Or you can telephone Epping Forest District Council on 01992 564000 and ask for a complaints form to be sent to you.

Please note that the Standards Committee at Epping Forest District Council will not investigate incidents that happened before Chigwell Parish Council adopted the Code of Conduct or before 5 May 2002, whichever is the earliest.

WHO SHOULD I COMPLAIN TO?

Lack of action/poor standard of service by the Parish Council, or complaints about employee conduct.	The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman of the Council.
Councillor conduct.	Standard's Committee of Epping Forest District Council.
Financial irregularity.	The Council's Auditor (contact details available from the Clerk).
Criminal activity.	The Police.

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



Letting us know . . .

This procedure has been based on guidance and best practice from the Standards Authority for England and the National Association for Local Councils. It enables members of the public to complain about a lack of action/poor standard of service by the Parish Council, or about employee conduct. To help you decide if this procedure is the most appropriate way to raise your complaint, please see the table on the back page of this leaflet.