

# **Horsmonden Parish Council - complaints procedure.**

Horsmonden Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of its parishioners. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the council or about a particular action (or lack of action) by the council, the Complaints Procedure below sets out how you may complain and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

Please note that this Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures. **It does not apply to:**

**i) Complaints about an employee of the council** (such as the clerk). These matters will be dealt with internally as an employment matter, with the appropriate action being taken as a result. The complaint should be addressed to the chair person initially. (Contact details below).

**ii) Complaints about a councillor.** These complaints should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. (Contact details below).

**iii) Complaints involving a criminal activity.** These matters should be referred to the Police.

*(If you are unsure as to whether your parish council are responsible for a matter which you wish to complain about; the easiest way is to ask the parish council by contacting the clerk, as listed below.)*

## **Complaints procedure:**

### **Before the meeting**

- 1) The complainant should register their complaint in writing by letter or email to the parish clerk. (Contact details are provided below).
- 2) Where possible the clerk will endeavour to resolve the complaint immediately. If this is not possible the clerk will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and submit your complaint to the council, to investigate.
- 3) Where a complaint is submitted to the council, this will be addressed at the next full meeting of the parish council, which the complainant (or their chosen representative) will be invited to attend. This meeting will usually take place within 30 days of the initial complaint.
- 4) The complainant will be asked to provide the council with copies of any documentation or evidence in support of their complaint at least seven working days prior to the meeting. The council will also supply the complainant with a copy of any documentation which they wish to rely on at the meeting, at least seven days beforehand.

### **At the meeting**

- 5) If the circumstances are considered appropriate, the council may decide to exclude the public and press from the meeting.
- 6) At the meeting the chair person will introduce each party and outline the procedures.

7) The complainant (or their chosen representative) will be allowed to outline their complaint to the council and answer any questions which i) the clerk and ii) the council may have regarding this.

8) The position of both sides should be summarised by the clerk and the complainant ( or their representative)

9) The clerk will be asked to explain the council's position and answer any questions from i) the complainant and ii) the council members

10) The clerk and the complainant will be asked to leave the room whilst the council discuss the matter and reach a decision.

11) The clerk and complainant will return to hear the council's decision (or to be advised when a decision will be made, if it has not been possible to reach a decision at that meeting).

**After the meeting.**

12) The decision of the council, together with any appropriate action to be taken, will be confirmed in writing to the complainant within seven working days.

**Contacts:**

<p><u>The clerk:</u> Mrs L Noakes, Horsmonden Parish Council, The Parish Office, Horsmonden Village Hall, Back Lane, Horsmonden, Kent. TN12 8LH</p> <p>01892 724989 ( Mon &amp; Wed 9am- 3pm &amp; Fri 9am -12pm) <a href="mailto:clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk">clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><u>Chairperson:</u> Cllr Jane March Swigs Hole Farm, Yew Tree Green Road Horsmonden, Kent, TN12 8HR</p> <p>01892 723481 <a href="mailto:Janemarch10@gmail.com">Janemarch10@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><u>Tunbridge Wells Monitoring officer:</u> The Monitoring Officer Tunbridge wells Borough Council Town Hall Royal Tunbridge wells, Kent TN1 1RS</p> <p>01892 554257 ( Mon-Fri, 9am- 5pm) <a href="mailto:Monitoring.officer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk">Monitoring.officer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><u>Local Government Ombudsman</u> PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH</p> <p>0300 061 0614 (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm) <a href="http://www.lgo.org.uk">www.lgo.org.uk</a></p> <p>*Please note that the Local Government Ombudsman is only able to investigate complaints made against town and parish councils if the complaint is about a parish or town council which is acting on behalf of another council. (E.g. if a county council has arranged that the parish council should maintain the grass verges, and the complaint was about this maintenance.)</p>

**This procedure was adopted by the Council at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015**