

## **GAWCOTT with LENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints**

Gawcott with Lenborough Parish Council is here to serve the Community but understands that sometimes things can go wrong.

If you have a complaint about the Parish Council as a whole, or any of its members or employees then we would like to hear from you. All complaints will be treated with confidentiality where circumstances demand and at all times with respect.

This document tells you how to complain and what procedures are followed once a complaint is received, including who deals with the complaint, when a decision is made and how you will be notified. Our purpose is to solve problems as quickly as possible, to encourage good practice and to prevent problems from occurring in future.

#### How to contact us:

Email: [parishclerk@gawcottwithlenboroughpc.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@gawcottwithlenboroughpc.co.uk)

Via the Contact Us on our website: [www.gawcottwithlenboroughpc.co.uk](http://www.gawcottwithlenboroughpc.co.uk)

#### Action upon receipt of complaint:

We will deal with any complaints as soon as possible. We will investigate the complaint and may be able to respond immediately. However, certain circumstances necessitate further investigation. In all cases we will contact you within 15 working days of receiving your complaint giving either a response or an update explaining the need for further investigation. We will also advise when a final answer may be expected.

In the first instance your complaint will be investigated by an officer of the council. If you are still unhappy then the complaint will be dealt with by a committee of the council. You may attend a Parish Council meeting to make representations about your complaint or request a meeting with the Clerk and/or a Councillor.

It is not appropriate for all complaints from the public to be dealt with under this complaints procedure. Some require special action where we may engage other bodies or actions. Examples of these and the action to be taken are:

**Financial Irregularity** – the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer will endeavour to provide an explanation of the item. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the elector has a statutory right to object to the council's audit of accounts pursuant to s16 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters it may be necessary for the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer to consult with the External Auditor or the Audit Commission.

**Criminal Activity** – this will be referred to the Police for investigation.

**Member Conduct** – if a complaint has been made regarding a councillor's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, this will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Buckinghamshire Council.

**Employee Conduct** – this will be dealt with under the Parish Council's internal disciplinary procedure as set out in Standing Orders.

It is hoped that you will never need to make use of this process, but should the need arise, rest assured that your concerns will be addressed in an appropriate and professional manner.

Adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 meeting