

# **EATON UNDER HEYWOOD & HOPE BOWDLER PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman – Cllr. Graham Watts**

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## **EATON UNDER HEWOOD & HOPE BOWDLER PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **1 Introduction**

Eaton Under Heywood & Hope Bowdler Parish Council (EHBPC) is committed to providing its services efficiently and to as high a standard as possible. EHBPC takes any complaints very seriously.

An up-to-date copy of this Policy shall be maintained on EHBPC's website, which is [www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk](http://www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk)

This Policy sets out the procedures for dealing with complaints by members of the public about EHBPC.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that EHBPC has a clear procedure for dealing with complaints in order to:

- Have the opportunity to respond and resolve any issues that arise
- Learn from mistakes and prevent them from happening in the future
- Review its' policies and procedures where necessary

### **2. Scope**

There are three main types of complaints:

- Complaints relating to employees
- Complaints relating to Councillors
- Complaints relating to EHBPC's administration, actions and procedures

Complaints relating to an EHBPC employee are to be dealt with internally, as an employment matter. Any complaints relating to an employee should be referred in the first instance to the Chairman.

Complaints relating to the conduct of a Councillor should be referred directly to:  
The Monitoring Officer, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, Shropshire  
SY2 6ND

Complaints relating to the administration, actions or procedures of EHBPC should be referred in the first instance to the Clerk or in her absence, to the Chairman.

### **3. EHBPC's Complaints Policy Procedure for dealing with complaints relating to EHBPC's administration, actions or procedures.**

**Proviso:** Whilst EHBPC will always endeavour to adhere to the following procedures, complainants are advised that the Clerk is employed for only 5 hours per week and there is no cover for her during absences due to holidays or illness: such absences will inevitably lead to a delay in matters being processed.

Complaints about procedures, actions or administration should be discussed with the Clerk. Mistakes and misunderstandings are often resolved informally at this stage. If the Clerk cannot resolve the complaint informally, the following steps should be taken:

- The complainant will be asked to put any complaint about EHBPC's procedures, actions or administration in writing to the Clerk, providing their name, postal and email address and contact number, together with the nature of the complaint. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk then it may be put to the Chairman or nominated deputy. By providing their name, address and contact number the complainant agrees to allow EHBPC to hold this data on its secure files and IT system for the duration of this matter until it is resolved, after which it will be deleted.
- The complainant should indicate whether they wish to have the complaint treated confidentially.
- The complaint shall be acknowledged in writing within seven working days and the complainant advised of the date when the matter will be considered by EHBPC.  
Complaints will usually be discussed at the next full meeting of the parish council. However, if the nature of the complaint is complex or urgent, then a specially convened meeting may be necessary.
- The complainant will be invited to attend the relevant meeting where the complaint is to be considered and may bring with them such representatives as they wish. EHBPC must be informed in advance of who will be attending and in what capacity.
- At least seven working days before the meeting the complainant will need to provide EHBPC with copies of any documentation or other evidence which may be referred to at the meeting. EHBPC will likewise provide the complainant with copies of any documentation which it may refer to during the meeting.

#### **Procedure at the Meeting**

- EHBPC shall consider whether the nature of the complaint and the complainant's expressed wishes concerning confidentially warrants the exclusion of the public at the parish council meeting. Any decisions on a complaint will be announced in public.
- The Chairman will introduce everyone and will explain the procedure.
- The complainant will be asked to outline the grounds for their complaint.

- If relevant, the Clerk will explain EHBPC's position in relation to the complaint.
- Councillors will then have an opportunity to ask questions.
- The complainant will then be offered the opportunity to provide a closing statement and will then leave the room whilst the councillors decide whether or not there are grounds for a complaint to be upheld.
- The complainant will then be invited back to hear either EHBPC's decision or will be advised when a decision will be made.

### **Procedure following the meeting**

- The decision made by EHBPC regarding the complaint will be confirmed in writing within seven working days of being made. Included with this will be details of any action to be taken. The complainant will have seven working days following the written confirmation to appeal the decision.

### **Appeals process**

- The complainant must inform EHBPC in writing if they wish to appeal against the decision.
- The request for an appeal shall be acknowledged in writing and the complainant advised of when the matter will be re-considered by EHBPC. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting where the appeal is to be considered and may bring with them such representatives as they wish.
- The appeal process will follow the same procedure as that outlined above, providing the complainant with the opportunity to explain their grounds for appeal.
- Following the appeal EHBPC will confirm its final decision in writing within seven days, together with details of any action to be taken.
- If following the appeal process the complainant is still not satisfied with the action taken, or if the complainant feels as though they have been unfairly treated, then the complainant can pursue their complaint through the Local Government Ombudsman, who provides an independent national service to investigate complaints about councils. The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted on 0300 061 0614 and further information can be obtained from [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk).

Reviewed 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018