

**COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**CODE OF PRACTICE ON HANDLING COMPLAINTS**  
**(Adopted 9th August 2022)**

The following Code of Practice is to be adhered to if a complaint is received from a member of the public about procedures or administration. Should the complainant refer to the behaviour of an elected Member, it is likely that the complaint should more properly be addressed to the Standards Board.

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is received, either orally by the Chairman, a Councillor or the Clerk and an immediate explanation does not satisfy the complainant, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk. If the complaint concerns action by the Clerk, the matter should be put in writing and forwarded to the Chairman of the Council.
2. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk or the Chairman, as the case may be, shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. However, notice is first given to the person about whom the complaint is made who shall be accorded an opportunity to comment. Where the Clerk or the Chairman receives a written complaint about his/her own actions, the complaint shall be passed to the Council.
3. The Clerk or the Chairman shall report any written complaint which has been disposed of at the next meeting of the Council.
4. The Clerk or the Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the Council will consider the complaint. Should the complainant so desire, he/she shall be accorded the opportunity to explain the complaint orally.
5. Prior to discussion of any complaint, the Council shall consider whether the content of the complaint warrants the matter being discussed in the absence of the public and the press. However, any decision on the complaint shall be announced in public. The complainant shall be notified in writing of the Council's decision.
6. The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is decided by the Council that issues of law or practice arise which require further legal or administrative advice. In such a case, the matter shall be dealt with at the next Council meeting after the advice is received.

**Reviewed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 – next review 2025**