



# Medstead Parish Council

## Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

### Introduction

This code of practice deals with the handling of complaints about the administration or procedures of Medstead Parish Council. This presently remains outside the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman.

Complaints about an employee should be addressed to the Chairman. They will be dealt with as an employment matter and complainants can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally.

Medstead Parish Council observes East Hampshire District Council's Code of Conduct. Complaints about Councillor conduct are therefore dealt with the Monitoring Officer at the District Council. Complaints should be in writing and addressed to:

The Monitoring Officer  
East Hampshire District Council  
PO Box 310  
Petersfield  
GU32 9HN

Medstead Parish Council will be notified of the nature of the complaint and asked to provide information or evidence to the Monitoring Officer.

This Code of Practice is therefore primarily aimed at situations where a complaint is being made about the administration of the Parish Council or about its procedures.

This Code of Practice is not an appropriate means to address a complaint against an individual where the provisions described above should instead be used.

The objective of this code of practice is to:

- Achieve a satisfactory outcome, if possible, for all parties involved.
- Resolve the complaint at the earliest possible point in the process.

### Code of Practice: Before the meeting

In order for a complaint to be considered by the Council

- 1) The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk.

- 2) If a complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they will be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
- 3) The Clerk will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 4) The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish.
- 5) Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant will provide the Medstead Parish Council with copies of any documentation, or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. Medstead Parish Council will similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

### **Code of Practice: At the meeting**

- 6) Press and public will be excluded from the meeting.
- 7) Chairman to introduce everyone and explain procedure.
- 8) Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
- 9) Councillors to ask any question of the complainant.
- 10) If relevant, Clerk to explain Medstead Parish Council's position.
- 11) Councillors to ask any question of the Clerk.
- 12) Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
- 13) Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave the room while Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, BOTH parties will be invited back).
- 14) Clerk and complainant return to hear decision or to be advised when decision will be made.

### **Code of Practice: After the meeting**

- 15) Decision confirmed to the complainant in writing within seven working days with details of any action to be taken.