Harrietsham Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Harrietsham Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to residents of the Parish and to anyone who deals with the Parish Council. The Parish Council is determined to conduct its business in a fair and equitable manner and where complaints arise the Council will attempt to resolve them by informal discussion.

In the event that this is unsuccessful, a formal complaint may be made.

Formal Complaints

If a formal complaint is to be made the complainant should write to the clerk giving full details of the matter and include any documentation or evidence relating to the complaint. The Clerk will formally record the date the complaint was received and send an acknowledgement within seven days of receipt.

The complaint will be investigated by either the Chairman (or in the Chairman's absence, the Vice Chairman) or if the complaint involves the conduct of the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman, by a designated member of the Council. A report of the findings will be produced for the complainant and for the Parish Council with any proposed remedy.

The report may be accepted, rejected or amended by the Parish Council which may decide to discuss the matter with the complainant directly at the time of consideration of the report. The complainant may bring a representative with them to the meeting.

At all times the complaint will be dealt with in confidence and with due regard to non-disclosure of exempt information.

In the event that the complaint relates to a Councillor's Code of Conduct, then a complaint should be made directly to the Maidstone Borough Council Monitoring Officer.

Data Protection Complaints

A data protection complaint is a complaint concerning the way in which the Parish Council has handled an individual's personal data or complied with its obligations under data protection legislation. This may include concerns about how personal data has been collected, used, shared, stored, retained or kept secure, or how the Council has dealt with a Subject Access Request or other data protection rights request.

Data protection complaints may be made to the Clerk in writing or by email. The Council will take reasonable steps to assist an individual who wishes to make a data protection complaint and will ensure that complaints are recognised and directed appropriately, even where the complainant has not specifically referred to data protection legislation.

The Council will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt within seven days. This is within the statutory requirement for data protection complaints to be acknowledged within 30 days.

The Council will take appropriate steps to investigate the complaint without undue delay. This will include making such enquiries as are appropriate to establish the relevant facts and considering the Council's compliance with applicable data protection legislation. Where an investigation cannot be concluded promptly, the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Once the investigation has been completed the Council will inform the complainant of the outcome without undue delay and explain any action or remedy that the Council considers appropriate.

The Council will maintain an appropriate record of the complaint, its investigation and the outcome.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's handling of their personal data or its response to their complaint, they have the right to raise their concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Council's Privacy Notice will provide information about an individual's right to make a data protection complaint to the Council and to the Information Commissioner's Office.