

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

## Public Complaints Procedure

Adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Minute Reference: 24/034

1. **Sonning Common Parish Council** is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

**3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:**

3.1. Complaints between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

3.2. Complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council and, if a

3.3. Complaint against a councillor is received by the council; it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer, South Oxfordshire District Council, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE email: [monitoring.officer@southvale.gov.uk](mailto:monitoring.officer@southvale.gov.uk). Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to a committee of Council members designated to investigate it.

8. The Clerk or the Complaints Committee of the Council or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or members of the Council.

9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Complaints Committee of the Parish Council or to the full Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

#### **Contacts:**

#### **The Clerk of Sonning Common Parish Council**

Philip Collings

Address:

Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, RG4 9SL

Telephone: 0881 972 3616

Email: [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

#### **The Chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council**

John Stoves

Address:

Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, RG4 9SL

Telephone: 0118 972 3616

Email: [john.stoves@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:john.stoves@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

## **Dealing with the Complaints at the Meeting of the Council**

1. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
2. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
3. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), members.
4. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.
5. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
7. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

### After the Meeting

8. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.