

## **Harthill with Woodall Parish Council**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Harthill with Woodall Parish Council ('Council') endeavour to provide the highest level of service to its Parishioners and it is always our intention to resolve genuine complaints to the satisfaction of parishioners.

In the unlikely event that a parishioner is dissatisfied either with Parish Councillors ('Councillors'), staff or the service provided this complaints procedure will be applied.

For complaints relating to Rotherham Borough Council, these should be directed to the relevant department at their offices at Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham S60 1AE. Please visit their website for further details <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/>

#### **Communications that are not complaints**

Communications with the Council are sometimes in the form of compliments, comments or reports and therefore will be dealt with in different ways. Where this is the case we will tell you. For example, if you report that a flower box is broken and needs attention or if you ask for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice.

In addition to being able to report to the Clerk you are also welcome to contact your local Councillor about any issue you need help with. You are encouraged to contact your Councillor by telephone, so they are able to take down all necessary details. Telephone numbers are in the HART or on our website.

You should set out, with as much detail as you can and as clearly as possible what it is you are dissatisfied with.

It is for the above reason and in order to prevent any confusion that, for a complaint to be dealt with under the complaints procedure, it must be entitled '**FORMAL COMPLAINT**'

In the event that you do not raise your concern as a Formal Complaint then in the first instance the Clerk will investigate and respond and will try their best to resolve the complaint if the investigation finds that there is a genuine problem.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days and the Clerk will endeavour to respond to the complaint within 10 working days.

Where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction you will be entitled to ask for the complaint to go on to a Formal Complaint.

Where the complaint relates directly to the behaviour of the Clerk or another Council employee or the Chairman then the complaint will automatically be dealt with under the Formal Complaints procedure.

### **Raising a Formal Complaint with the Council.**

1. The complainant should put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk to the following address:  
The Clerk, Harthill with Woodall Parish Council, The Village Hall, Winney Hill, Harthill, Sheffield S26 7YL or send the letter by email to:  
Clerk@harthillwithwoodall-pc.gov.uk  
If you are unable, for whatever reason, to put the complaint in writing then you will be asked to visit the Village Hall at the above address and give your complaint to the Clerk who will take down what you say, read it back to you and ask you to sign it.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, he or she should address the letter to the chairman of the council and email it to:  
Councillor Joy Pattison - [j.pattison@harthillwithwoodall-pc.gov.uk](mailto:j.pattison@harthillwithwoodall-pc.gov.uk)
3. The clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. Complainants will be asked at the outset if they wish the complaint to be treated confidentially. The Council must adhere to its obligations under the Data Protection Act to safeguard against any unlawful disclosure of personal data.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

### **At the Meeting**

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 will 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 will then be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant will 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 will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

### **After the Meeting**

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

### **Notes**

This process should not be used for complaints that relates to the behaviour or conduct of a Councillor, in which case you will be advised of the procedure to refer the matter to the Rotherham MBC (RMBC) Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct.

In this instance you should submit your written complaint to: -

The Monitoring Officer,  
Council Offices  
Riverside House,  
Main Street,  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S60 1AE  
Tel. 01709 382121