

**WORTHAM & BURGATE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Code of Practice**  
**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

This Code of Practice was adopted by the Council, in conjunction with Standing Orders, at its Meeting held on 22 April 2003.

1. If a complaint about procedure or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk s/he shall be advised to put it to the chairman.
3.
  - a) On receipt of a written complaint the clerk or chairman, as the case maybe, shall (*except where the complaint is about his or her own actions*) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or a councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.
  - b) Where the clerk or chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions s/he shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
4. The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. The clerk or 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 complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.
6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. As soon as maybe after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
8. A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint *only* if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary from the Association. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
9. If the complainant feels strongly and thinks there is substantive evidence against a councillor(s) the Council should advise him/her, to direct their complaint to the Standards Board for England.