

## **Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council – Complaints Policy**

### **Purpose**

This Policy outlines the procedures for addressing complaints regarding the Parish Council's administration or procedures.

---

### **Procedure**

#### **1. Initial Complaint**

- If a complaint about the Parish Council's administration or procedures is made orally to a Councillor or the Clerk, they should attempt to resolve it immediately.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved on the spot, the complainant should be asked to submit the complaint in writing to the Clerk. The complainant will be assured that the complaint will be addressed promptly upon receipt.
- If the complainant prefers not to contact the Clerk, they may submit the complaint to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

#### **2. Complaint Handling**

- Upon receiving a written complaint, the Clerk or Chairman (except in cases where the complaint is about their own actions) will attempt to resolve the issue directly with the complainant.
- Before acting on a complaint, the Clerk or Chairman will notify the person being complained about and allow them to provide a response.
- If the complaint concerns the actions of the Clerk or Chairman, the matter will be referred to an independent Councillor.

#### **3. Reporting Complaints**

- Any written complaints resolved directly with the complainant will be reported to the next Parish Council meeting.
- Complaints that remain unresolved will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. The Clerk will inform the complainant of the meeting date when the complaint will be considered.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

- The Parish Council will consider whether the discussion of the complaint should take place in the absence of the press and public. However, any final decision on the complaint will be announced in a public session.

#### **5. Communication**

- Following a decision on the complaint, the Parish Council will notify the complainant in writing as soon as reasonably possible, detailing any action to be taken.
- 

### **Additional Provisions**

#### **1. Anonymous Complaints**

- The Parish Council will generally not act on anonymous complaints. However, if an anonymous complaint raises serious concerns (e.g., misconduct, fraud, safeguarding), the Council may investigate at its discretion.
  - 2. **Vexatious Complaints**
    - The Parish Council will maintain a separate policy for handling persistent, unreasonable, or vexatious complaints. This ensures that resources are used appropriately while preventing legitimate concerns from being overshadowed by repetitive or malicious complaints.
  - 3. **Timelines for Complaint Resolution**
    - Complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receipt.
    - A formal response or resolution should be provided within 20 working days, where possible.
    - If the investigation takes longer, the complainant will be informed of the delay and provided with an estimated timeframe for resolution.
  - 4. **Appeals Process**
    - If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision, they may submit a written appeal within 10 working days.
    - The appeal will be considered by a panel of three independent Councillors who were not involved in the original complaint handling.
    - A final decision will be communicated to the complainant within 20 working days of the appeal submission.
- 

## **Review History**

- Adopted by Parish Council: 20/3/2025
- Latest review:
- Date of next review: 20/3/2027