EARDISLEY GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Eardisley Group Parish Council adopted the following policy with effect from 23.07.2018. Last reviewed May 2024 [no change.]

1) This policy document sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints made in relation to Eardisley Group Parish Council's administration and procedures. NB: *The conduct of councillors is covered by the Parish Council's (Model Code of Conduct) (England) adopted by the Council and shall be referred back to the Council.*

2) If a complaint about the Council's procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing[1] addressed to the clerk and be assured it will be dealt with promptly after receipt. As a guide, the clerk should aim to acknowledge all complaints within 48 hours of receipt. NB: due to the part-time working hours of the clerk, this may not always be possible, but every effort will be made to acknowledge such communications as swiftly as possible.

3) If the complainant prefers not to send their complaint via the clerk, he or she shall be advised to alternatively address it to the Chairman of the Council.

4) On receipt of a written complaint, the clerk or chairman (as the case may be) shall, *except where the complaint is about his/her own actions*, try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant within the existing policy of the Council, but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or a councillor without notifying the person complained about and providing him/her with an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the clerk or chairman receives a written complaint about his/her own actions, he/she shall immediately refer the complaint to the Council.

5) The clerk or the chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint resolved through direct action with the complainant.

6) The clerk or the chairman shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the parish council. The clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an

[1] In writing may constitute a letter or email

opportunity to explain the complaint orally. [Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standards Board proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings, when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press or deferred on appropriate advice received.]

7) The council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it believes issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

8) 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.

9) As soon as may be practicable after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

10) In the event of serial, facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public, the Council shall consider taking legal advice before responding formally to the complainant.

DATA PROTECTION

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that personal information is handled in a secure and confidential manner in accordance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and professional guidelines. The Parish Council will use all appropriate and necessary means at its disposal to comply with the Data Protection Act and associated guidance. Please also refer to our Data Protection Policy for further information.