South Wootton Parish Council
Compliments or Complaints

Whether you have a compliment about the Parish Council, or you simply want to comment about our meetings, facilities, services or staff, we would like to hear from you. Feed back from the people of South Wootton, whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- To make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- To solve problems as quickly as possible
- To prevent problems from happening again, and
- To encourage good practice

How to contact us with your compliments or complaints.

You can contact South Wootton Parish Council by telephone, in writing, by Email or by visiting in person. A form is included with this leaflet which you can fill in and send back to us. A List of contact details is given on the back page of this leaflet.

What we will do when we hear from you.

We will deal with any comments about the Parish Council as quickly as possible. We will make sure that your comments are directed to the right person. We may be able to give you an answer straight away, or we may need more time to investigate what you have told us. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer, or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer.

Confidentially

We will treat your complaint in confidence. Details will only be given to those members of staff directly concerned. If you have a complaint, we hope we will be able to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure it won't happen again.

How to contact us.

The Parish Council's telephone number is:

(01553) 824355

Our Email Address is: clerk@southwootton-pc.gov.uk

If writing, please write to:

The Parish Clerk
South Wootton Parish Council
Church Lane
South Wootton
Kings Lynn
PE30 3LJ

Code of Practice for Complaints

1. If a complaint about the Parish Council is notified orally to a Councillor or to the Parish Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant, then the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk on the form provided. The complainant must be asked at the outset if he wants the complaint to be treated confidentially. If the complainant is required to use a complaint form that has been designed by the council, the council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and safeguard against the unlawful disclosure or personal data.
2. If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.
3. Any written complaint about a Councillor or Council Staff will be answered within 7 days. Where it is not possible to give full answers, an explanation of why more time is needed will be given. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, a complaint form and copy of the Code of Practice will be sent within 7 days. When a complaint received is about a member of staff or Councillor, the person concerned will be notified and given an opportunity for comment on the matter. Complaints lodged about Council staff should be dealt with by the Parish Clerk and only passed to the Council if the complainant remains dissatisfied.
4. A letter of complaint about a Council procedure will receive a reply within 15 days. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied a complaints form will be sent within 7 days.
5. The Parish Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Parish Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
6. The Parish Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has been settled to the next meeting of the Parish Council after the complaint has been initially investigated and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date by which the complaint will be considered. If necessary the Parish Clerk will appoint a Complaints Panel to fully investigate the complaint. If for any reason the date becomes unachievable, a letter and explanation for this will be sent to the complainant with a revised date.
7. The complaints panel will be a least 3 members of the Council of which one will be the Chairman.
8. The Complaints Panel should investigate all the evidence surrounding the complaint. Where a complaint is considered about a person, this should be dealt with appropriate confidentiality and in the absence of the press and public. The complainant may make verbal representation and may be accompanied by a friend/relative. The complainant should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk or other nominated officer or by members if this is a meeting of the complaints sub-committee. The Clerk or other nominated officer (or if the complaint concerns them, another member of staff or member) will have the opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant. The Clerk or other nominated officer, or as the case may be, the complaints sub-committee and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their respective positions. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
9. <u>Complaints – Code of Conduct</u>
   When a complaint is made relating to the Code of Conduct it should be sent direct to The Standards Board and then referred to the Monitoring Officer.
10. As soon as may be after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
11. The Council shall defer investigating any written complaint *only* if it is of opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which legal advice is necessary. The complaint shall be considered at the next appropriate meeting after the advice has been received.

12. Complaints – Incident Book
A complaints incident book will be kept in the Council Offices. Staff involved in an incident or disagreement whether giving rise to complaint or not with a member of the public or Councillor must enter the details of it in this book within twenty-four hours of the incident taking place. An incident is considered as a situation where voices are raised, strong language used or threatening or violent behaviour is experienced.
All complaints received in writing will be entered in this book.

Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaint Procedure

Guidance to the Complaint Panel

When enquiring into a complaint the Panel must consider the following:

- That the person(s) subject of the complaint must be given the opportunity of responding in answer to the complaint verbally or in writing or both. The person(s) subject of the complaint is given the right to have a friend present at any hearing if they chose to do so.

- Where the complaint concerns a member of staff, then the Grievance & Disciplinary Policy Procedure should be followed.

- Any person(s) who may be able to provide information to substantiate the complaint or otherwise should be spoken to and asked for their recollection. Such information may be verbal or in writing with a record made of the interview.

- The Panel may wish to elicit further information from the complainant and may offer the complainant the opportunity of further discussing the content of the complaint.

- The member of the Panel must record the time and date when the complainant, the person(s) complained of or witnesses were asked to comment.

Adopted 2015
Reviewed May 2026 Signed ……..
Date of next review May 2029

SOUTH WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL **CONFIDENTIAL**

Compliments and Complaints Form **Date Received_____ Ref No____**

Your Name –

How do you want to be contacted? Email ☐ Letter ☐ Telephone ☐

Your contact details –

If you would prefer to be contacted by telephone, please tell us the best time to contact you –

Please give details of your compliment or complaint –

If necessary, please continue over the page

Have you spoken to, emailed or written to anyone at the Council? Yes/No

If yes, please give their name -

What happened as a result of this contact?

What would be the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint?

Please note that complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. The names of those making a complaint and details of the complaint will only be disclosed to those members of staff needing to know for the purpose of the investigation. The Parish Clerk may also inform the Chairman and / or Vice-Chairman.

Please return this form to the Parish Clerk, The Parish Office,
South Wootton Parish Council, 24 Church Lane, South Wootton, Kings Lynn. PE30 3LJ