

Drinkstone Parish Council Complaints Procedure **Adopted on**

1. Drinkstone Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 3.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - 3.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on *May 2019* and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council.
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.
6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council .

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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Drinkstone Parish Council (“Council”) is committed to ensuring that, in the exercise of its functions, it fulfils its legal responsibilities under all legislation concerning equality and diversity and does not engage in unlawful discrimination within the Council (including staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors) and in the delivery of its service to the public. opportunities.

The Council will actively develop positive practices which promote equality of opportunity and enable residents and customers to fully participate and staff to realise their full potential. No resident, customer, job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or will be disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be justified.

The Council will ensure that all decisions on participation, recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career development are based on abilities, merits, and objective job-related criteria.

All Staff and Councillors are required to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to create a culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance.

Commitments:

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious learning environment in which all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to termination of membership.

Drinkstone Parish Council

Markets	Drinkstone PC do not currently operate a market
Public conveniences	Drinkstone PC do not currently operate a public convenience
Agency agreements	Not applicable
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Not applicable
Additional Information	
None	

Contact details:

Mrs Hilary Workman
 123 York Road
 Bury St Edmunds
 Suffolk IP33 3EG
 Tel: 07988 643772
 Email drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Colour copying not available	
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee	Not applicable	
Other	Staff time @ £25.00 per hour	Recommended by ICO

* the actual cost incurred by the public authority

Drinkstone Parish Council

Requests for Information Policy

Drinkstone Parish Council has an obligation to make information available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. The procedure for dealing with applications is as follows;

To make a request under the Freedom of Information Act please contact the Parish Council in writing to the Clerk by letter or email (drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com).

Please ensure to include;

Your full name

Your address and postcode

Your email address and/or telephone number (in case of query)

Details of the information you are requesting. Please be as specific as possible to help reduce the time needed to deal with your request – this could affect any costs that you may incur.

Send your request to

Mrs Hilary Workman

Parish Clerk

123 York Road

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk IP33 3EG

Or email drinkstoneclerk@gmail.com

Drinkstone Parish Council will respond by;

Entering details of your request into its Freedom of Information log book and sending you an acknowledgement.

You will be informed of the date of commencement of the statutory 20 working day period.

You will be advised of the cost that you will need to pay for your request - the payment will be required before the information is provided.

The Parish Council will provide the information you have requested within 20 working days or explain why it is unable to do so.

A request may be refused where;

The request is vexatious or repeated

The cost of complying with the request exceeds the 'appropriate limit'

The information requested falls under one of the exemptions listed in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act.

DRINKSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of Health and Safety legislation for premises and activities for which it is responsible.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1 The Parish Council aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors, residents and members of the public within its area, who may be affected by the Council's activities.

2.2. The Parish Council will ensure that any buildings and amenities belonging to the Council are properly managed by the Council and that the Council set up and monitor appropriate Health and Safety policies and procedures for the protection of the public.

2.3. Councillors are required to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety when carrying out duties on behalf of the Parish Council.

3. The Parish Clerk

3.1 If the Parish Clerk works from home, he/she must ensure that he/she works in a safe working environment.

3.2 This includes observing the legal recommendations for safe handling, the use of computer equipment, and workstation design.

4. Contractors, Employees and Volunteer Workers.

4.1. The Parish Council will ensure that any contractors or Volunteer Workers employed to carry out work on behalf of the Council have adequate and appropriate Public Liability insurance.

4.2. Contractors and Volunteer Workers will report to the Clerk or any nominated Councillor any hazard or situation encountered during their work, which may affect members of the public.

4.3. Employees, Contractors and Volunteers should:

1. Seek advice on safety and health matters from the Clerk.
2. Make proper use of protective clothing and safety equipment provided.
3. Report immediately to the Clerk any defects in plant, structures, equipment or safety procedures which come to their notice.
4. Report promptly to the Clerk any incidents which have led or might lead to injury or damage and co-operate with any investigation which might be undertaken with the object of preventing accidents or re-occurrence of incidents.

4.4 Employees and volunteers are reminded that they have a duty to care for their own safety and that of other workers and other persons who might be affected by their activities and to co-operate with the Council so as to enable it to carry out its own responsibilities successfully. The final level of responsibility is, however, that of each and every individual.

4.5 A copy of this statement will be issued to all Council employees and Councillors. It will be revised added to or modified from time to time.

5. Roads and footpaths

5.1 The Parish Council is responsible for monitoring the safety of roads and footpaths in its area, and will promptly report any hazards that are brought to its attention to the appropriate authorities for further action.

6. Environment

6.1 The Parish Council will ensure that, as far as possible, the Parish remains a safe and pleasant environment for its residents.

6.2. The Parish Council will obtain specialist technical and Health and Safety advice for any projects or pieces of work that could affect the general public.

6.3 The Council will ensure that any work activities carried out on its behalf do not unreasonably jeopardize the Health and Safety of the general public.

7. Risk assessment

7.1 The Parish Council will carry out a risk assessment of all its activities and review this annually.

7.2 The Council will set up and monitor policies and procedures to reduce any risks that are identified.

8. Council Safety Officer

8.1 The Clerk, as the appointed Safety Officer will:

- Assume the day to day responsibility of ensuring the safety policy is reviewed, maintained, regularly reviewed and adhered to.

- Ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out of working practices, with subsequent consideration and review of any necessary corrective/protective measures. Maintain a file of risk assessments, summarised in the Minutes.
- Make effective arrangements to ensure those contractors or voluntary helpers working for the Council comply with all reasonable Health and Safety at Work requirements. All contractors will be given a copy of the Council's Health & Safety at Work Policy.

- Maintain a record of notified accidents.

- When an accident or hazardous incident occurs, take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.

- Act as the contact and liaison point for the Health and Safety

Inspectorate and obtain specialist technical advice and assistance on matters of Health and Safety where necessary.

9. Review of the policy

9.1. This policy was adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 1 April 2015 and will be reviewed in November 2016 and annually thereafter.

Press and Media Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with the media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.

1.2 It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, it provides guidance on how to deal with issues that may arise when dealing with the media.

2 KEYS AIMS

2.1 The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media – press, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Council and to explain the reasons for particular policies and priorities.

2.2 It is important that the press have access to the Clerk/ Members and to background information to assist them in giving accurate information to the public. To balance this, the Council will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.

3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the governments Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

3.2 The Parish Council's adopted Standing Orders should be adhered to.

4. CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

4.1 The Clerk and Members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.

4.2 Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who responsible and appropriate action was taken.

4.3 When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made. Whenever possible any information given to the press shall be given in writing so as not to leave interpretation open to misunderstanding and misreporting.

4.4 There are a number of personal privacy issues for the Clerk and Members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details are in the public domain); disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Clerk before any response is made to the media.

4.5 When responding to approaches from the media, the Clerk or the Chairman are authorised to make contact with the media.

4.6 Statements made by the Chairman and the Clerk should reflect the Council's opinion.

4.7 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council.

4.8 There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk.

5 ATTENDANCES OF MEDIA AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request.

5.2 The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating and workspace will be made available.

5.3 Any filming or taping of Council proceedings by the media must be with prior notice to the Clerk and Chairman of the meeting (see Standing Orders).

6 PRESS RELEASES

6.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.

6.2. The Clerk or any Member may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.

8. Changes

This policy will be a living document and will be able to be altered by the Parish Clerk to allow immediate action should the unexpected arise. This will be key to overcoming teething problems that have not already been identified. Changes to the policy will be highlighted at the next Council meeting to keep Members abreast of the changes.