

***Code of Practice in Handling Complaints***

1. This Code of Practice has been adopted so you can follow the procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Neen Savage Parish Council.
2. This policy does not cover complaints between employee and employer which is covered by our Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.
3. If your complaint is about procedures or administration as practised by the Council's employees you should contact the Clerk, verbally, in the first instance so that they can seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of Council: Cllr Arthur Ratcliff, Shunesley, Neen Savage, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY14 8LN.
4. If you have a complaint against a parish councillor, you should write to The Monitoring Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND. Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by Council in 2012. The Localism Act 2011 has arrangements to regulate the conduct of members of local authorities and as such are responsible for receiving and investigating code of conduct issues and make recommendations to the Parish Council.
5. If your complaint is about decisions made by the Council you should write to the Clerk. Decisions made by the Council may be referred back to Council (but note Section 7 of the Council's Standing Orders which says that issues shall not be re-opened for six months). If you wish to raise concerns on any parish matter please write to the Clerk in the first instance. The public are invited to raise any concerns, especially in relation to items on the Agenda, during the Public Participation Session at the beginning of each Council meeting.
6. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman of Council or the Clerk (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
7. The Clerk or relevant person will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant, and person/s complained against in order to resolve the issue or take further action if necessary. We aim to deal promptly with any complaint and notify you within 20 working days (unless legislation dictates otherwise) of the outcome of your complaint and what action (if any) shall be taken. If we need to extend this timescale we will keep the complainant informed. Council will determine how long it will spend on each complaint and when it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. If the complaint is deemed unreasonable, the Council will write to the complainant to explain this. The complainant may challenge the Council's decision. If Council deems this to be a fair challenge then it will conduct a review of the complaint procedure having taken place. If Council feels that re-opening the complaint cannot be justified or is unreasonable, the complainant will be notified in writing that the case has been closed and that there will be no further communications.

## NEEN SAVAGE PARISH COUNCIL

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8. The Clerk or Chairman of the Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
9. The Clerk or Chairman of the Council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. 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 unless such a matter may be related to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or 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 and press or deferred on appropriate advice received. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances concerning 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.
10. As soon as may be possible 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. 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. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
12. Complaints will be kept on file for no longer than three years (subject to data protection and other legislation).
13. This policy shall be reviewed as new legislation and policies come into force and at least annually.

#### **Contact details for the Parish Clerk**

Mrs Dorothy McBride  
Neen Savage Parish Council  
The Willows  
Hollywaste  
Cleobury Mortimer DY14 0HB

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