**Binham Parish Council**

*Clerk: Mrs Sarah Hayden Chairman: Elizabeth Brady*

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**Complaints Procedure**

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council’s administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council or relevant Committee as appropriate for consideration.

2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Councillor. Complaints against individual councillors should first be referred to the North Norfolk District Council Monitoring Officer, who deals with all complaints relating to standard issues. Complaints have to be made against individuals not the Parish Council. The Monitoring Officer will normally consult with the Parish through the Clerk and will make recommendations, although he has no enforcement powers.

3. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council’s employees is notified orally to a Councillor or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

4. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council. The complaint will be dealt with within twenty-one days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.

5. (a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk) will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts will be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

 (b) Where the Clerk to the Council or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk’s actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Council. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

7. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.

8. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.

9. Matter relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking or are likely to take place, will be dealt with in accordance with the Council’s grievance and disciplinary procedures detailed in the relevant contract of employment.

10. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.

11. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

12. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.