

## **HOTHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. The Committee will consist of a chairman and a Vice Chairman from the wider community who do not live within the parish of Hothfield, and one serving member of Hothfield Parish Council.
2. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected on the basis that their expertise and knowledge will be beneficial to the Committee and the serving member of Hothfield Parish Council will serve the local interest.
3. The Committee will be elected each year at the Annual Parish Council meeting.
4. Existing Members will be eligible for re-election.
5. A total of three parish councillors will be elected to serve on this committee, although for any hearing the Chairman shall decide which of these will be invited to join the committee and the other two will be reserves.
6. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected annually by the members of Hothfield Parish Council and will not be serving members of the Parish Council.
7. The press and public will be excluded from meetings of the Complaints Committee.
8. The Committee will meet as necessary to respond to complaints against members of Hothfield Parish Council, Hothfield Parish Council as a corporate body, or its employees, which cannot be dealt with via the Complaints Procedure.
9. A minimum of 3 days clear notice will be given of all meetings.
10. The Complaints Committee will be responsible for deciding on the nature of a complaint ie whether the allegations are complaints about Hothfield Parish Council (wholly or partly) or complaints about an employee (wholly or partly).
11. The complainant will be asked to put their formal complaint in writing. All correspondence should be conducted through the Clerk to the Parish Council.
12. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and advise that it is to be heard by the Formal Complaints Committee.
13. The complainant shall be invited to attend a special meeting convened for the purpose and bring with them a representative if they wish.
14. All relevant parties will be given the chance to speak if they so wish.

15. The Committee will decide on the validity of any complaints.
16. The Committee will arrange for the collection of evidence as required.
17. The Committee will decide on any action to be taken regarding any valid complaint against an individual councillor, the council as a corporate body or any employee of the council.
18. Breaches of the Members Code of Conduct will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Ashford Borough Council.
19. The minutes of the meeting will be taken by the Parish Clerk, but as they are a confidential document they will not be in the public domain.
20. The decision will be relayed to the complainant within seven working days of the date of the meeting.
21. Whilst maintaining confidentiality, all decisions and action taken by the Complaints Committee will be reported back to the next full meeting of Hothfield Parish Council.
22. The decision of the Complaints Committee is final and there is no right of appeal.