SHOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Parish Council's **administration and procedures.** It applies to the Parish Council's employees. Councillors are covered by Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 25th June 2012. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council [but note Council Standing Order 7 which says that issues shall not be re-opened for six months].

2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk to the Council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of Council.

4. (a) On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman of Council or the Clerk to the Council *(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 him or her opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

   (b) Where the Clerk to the Council or the Chairman of Council receives a written complaint about the Clerk to the Council's own actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of Council. The Clerk to the Council shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

5. The Clerk to the Council or Chairman of Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

6. The Clerk to the Council or Chairman of Council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk to the Council 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, Disciplinary or Standard Board 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 or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received)

7. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.