**PART E - COMPLAINTS POLICY& PROCEDURE**

**POLICY**

Staunton Coleford Parish Council endeavours to carry out its statutory and other duties fairly and transparently at all times. The Council acknowledges however that there may be times when Parishioners or others may consider that the Council has failed to maintain an acceptable standard of behaviour , and therefore wish to either comment or make a formal complaint regarding such a concern.

This Policy deals with the ways in which individuals may register a concern or a complaint. Please note that matters dealt with in this Policy should relate to the manner in which the Council has / Councillors have behaved either corporately or as Individuals, rather than be a matter of disagreement with a particular decision. The Council is entitled to make any decision it wishes, providing that it does so legally and in the proper manner.

The Council believe that it is best to try to resolve such situations in an informal manner, and encourages people to firstly approach the Clerk; the Chairman or other Councillor informally, either verbally or in writing. Most concerns can be resolved in this manner.

If the matter relates to the conduct of the Clerk to the Council, individuals should approach the Chairman of the Council where possible. Conversely, where the concern relates to a Councillor, then individuals should approach the Clerk to the Council.

It may be possible to call an informal meeting between the complainant and a small number of Council members and the Clerk to try to resolve the matter.

Should the matter not be resolved, then an individual may request that the matter be dealt with as a formal complaint, and a separate Complaints Procedure, below.

Should a complainant not be satisfied with the way in which a Complaint has been dealt with, then representation should be made to the Monitoring Officer at the Forest of Dean District, who has the power to investigate the actions of Parish Councils and Parish Councillors. Again it is emphasised that the Standards Officer will be interested in the behaviour and actions of the Council or Councillors rather than the decisions.

**PROCEDURE**

The Complaints committee to comprise the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council, and at least two other Councillors, to consider complaints made against the Council. All members to be entitled to attend with minimum of three required to consider the complaint.

**BEFORE THE MEETING**

1. Complainant requested to submit his complaint in writing to the Clerk, or, if they prefer, to the Chairman
2. Clerk to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the date when the matter will be considered by the Council
3. Clerk to invite complainant to a meeting, bringing with them such representatives as they wish
4. Not less than 10 clear working days prior to the meeting, the Council and complainant to exchange copies of documentation to be used as evidence / defence at the meeting

**AT THE MEETING**

1. The meeting shall not be open to the public
2. Chairman to explain procedure
3. Complainant to outline grounds for complaint
4. Complainant questioned by the Council
5. Council to state the Council’s position
6. Council questioned by the complainant
7. Any further points to be raised by both sides
8. If decision to be made at meeting:

8.1 Complainant ( and representative if present ) asked to leave the meeting while

 Council discusses the matter

8.2 Complainant ( and representative if present ) asked to return to be advised of

 Council’s decision, or to be advised when decision will be made

1. If decision not to be made, complainant to be advised when decision will be made

## AFTER THE MEETING

Decision advised / confirmed to complainant in writing within 10 working days of the meeting, together with details of any action to be taken.

1. Complaint and decision reported to Council at next meeting.