WEST ITCHENOR PARISH COUNCIL
CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

This Code of Practice is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Parish Council or about its procedures. It is designed for those complaints which cannot satisfactorily dealt with by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Parish Clerk or Chairman of the Council. This Code does not apply to complaints about individual Councillors or employees, about which advice should be sought from the Parish Clerk.

BEFORE THE MEETING

1. The Complainant should be asked to put their complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

2. If the Complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to put it, in writing to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the Parish Council or by a Committee established for the purpose of hearing complaints.

4. The Complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish.

5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the Complainant shall provide the Parish Council (by way of the Clerk) with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Parish Council shall similarly, provide the Complainant with copies of any documentation or other evidence upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

AT THE MEETING

6. The Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press, Any decision on a Complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council or Committee meeting in public

7. The Chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone

8. The Chairman of the meeting shall explain the procedure to be followed for the meeting

9. The Complainant (or their representative) will outline the grounds of their complaint

10. Members of the Parish Council or Committee shall ask any questions of the Complainant

11. If relevant, the Parish Clerk shall explain the Parish Council's position

12. Members of the Parish Council or Committee shall ask any questions of the Parish Clerk

13. The Parish Clerk and then the Complainant shall be offered the opportunity of last words (in that order)

14. The Parish Clerk and the Complainant shall be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both shall be invited back to the room)

15. The Parish Clerk and the Complainant will return to hear the decision or be advised when the decision will be made

AFTER THE MEETING

16. The decision of the Parish Council or Committee to be confirmed in writing within seven days, together with details of any action to be taken.