

Berkswell Parish Council - Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

It is hoped that all of the services that the Council provides will be undertaken in a manner that meets with residents satisfaction. If any resident has any concerns or suggestions it is probably best that they contact a Councillor or the Parish Clerk to make an informal suggestion or discuss the issue. Residents can also come to a Parish Council meeting, the dates and locations of which are published on our web site and can address the Council during the "public session". It is all very informal and Councillors welcome comments from the public.

However, for more serious issues, a member of the public might wish to make a formal complaint. This Policy explains how you should do that and how your complaint will be handled.

2. Formal Complaints Procedure

- 2.1. The Complainant should put the complaint about the council's procedures, administration or conduct in writing to the Parish Clerk. If the Complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, then he or she can address it to the Chairman of the Council.
- 2.2. The Complaint will be either be handled via correspondence or with a formal meeting. If the Complainant wishes to meet with Councillors, then that should be included in the initial letter of Complaint, otherwise the Council will determine whether a face to face meeting will be necessary for them understand the issues fully.
- 2.3. The Clerk or Chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by a committee established to investigate the issue. The Complainant will also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or heard in public and whether the Councillors would like the Complainant to attend personally.
- 2.4. If appropriate, the Complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and can bring with them a representative if she/he wishes.
- 2.5. The Complainant should provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on to help proceedings move as quickly as possible and at least 7 days prior to the meeting to allow effective use of the meeting's time.
- 2.6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. However, any decision on a complaint must be announced at the Council meeting in public in the interest of transparency of Council actions.

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2.7. Conduct of the Meeting

- 2.7.1.** The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- 2.7.2.** If attending personally, the Complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk or Councillors to ensure they fully understand the issue
- 2.7.3.** The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the position to date and questions may be asked by of the Clerk by the Complainant and Councillors
- 2.7.4.** The Clerk and then the Complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
- 2.7.5.** The Clerk and the Complainant should be asked to leave the room while Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, *both* parties shall be invited back.
- 2.7.6.** The Clerk and the Complainant will be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

- 2.8.** The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days of the meeting together with details of any action to be taken.

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