

Complaints Procedure

1 Introduction

The Batheaston Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to residents of the Parish, and to anyone who deals with the Parish council.

It is committed to conducting its business in a fair and equitable manner and the aim of this policy is to investigate all complaints promptly – in an impartial manner – and find solutions satisfactory to both the complainant and the Council.

The council will do its utmost to settle complaints, and satisfy complainants, in the interest of the good reputation of the Council.

2 Complaints against Councillors

This procedure does not cover complaints against an individual Councillor.

This must be referred to: Maria Lucas,

The Monitoring Officer,
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Lewis House
Manvers Street
BATH BA1 1JG

The monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor and will not deal with complaints that are not covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct. Complaints can only be about a Councillor's failure to follow this Code.

3 Definition of Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the Public about a Council's action, or lack of action, or about a standard of service provided by the Council itself to a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

Excluded from this procedure

| Type of Conduct | Refer to... |
|------------------------|--|
| Financial Irregularity | Complaints should be referred to the Council's Auditor : PKF Littlejohn |
| Criminal Activity | The Police |
| Member Conduct | The Monitoring Officer |
| Employee Conduct | Internal disciplinary procedure. Complaints concerning a member of staff should be made in writing to the Clerk. If the complaint concerns the Clerk, then the complaint should be made in writing to the Chairman of the Council |

The procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council – or relevant Committee as appropriate – for consideration.

The Council may receive queries, problems and comments as part of its day-to-day operation and it is not appropriate for every comment to be treated as a 'formal complaint'. Every effort will be made to deal with problems immediately, either by providing information, instigating the appropriate action, or explaining a decision.

All complaints will be treated as 'informal complaints' unless a written complaint states that it is 'formal'.

The complaints procedure will NOT apply to complaints made anonymously.

4 Informal Complaints

May be made by telephone, email, in person or in writing to the Clerk.

If the complaint refers to the clerk, then the complainant should be advised to write to the Chairman of the Council.

If a complaint is made to a Councillor it is their duty to notify the Clerk or Council Chairman.

The Clerk, or Council Chairman, will speak directly to the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint, and to ensure that the complainant feels satisfied that their grievance has been fully considered, taken seriously and acted upon accordingly.

If the Clerk, or Council Chairman, cannot satisfy a complainant in an informal way, then the Formal Complaints Procedure will be instigated.

5 Formal Complaints

The complainant will be asked to put their complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk. If the complainant does not wish to approach the Clerk they should be advised to address it to the Council Chairman.

The letter should contain the following information:-

- Name, address and telephone number of the complainant;
- Details of the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration;
- How the issue has affected the complainant;
- Copies of any relevant documents or other evidence;
- Details of third parties and their involvement;
- What action the complainant believes will resolve the complaint.

The Clerk to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days and will advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by Council.

The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and bring a representative if they wish.

Any documents not already supplied must be sent to the clerk seven clear days before the meeting. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation on which they wish to refer to at the meeting within the same timescale.

6 At the Meeting

The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.

There may be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when there is clearly no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken.

These matters should be referred to the Clerk/Chairman, and in the event of a seemingly serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaint, the Council may consider taking legal action.