

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR USE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

Adopted by Porlock Parish Council

On 8th March 2023

The following procedure has been 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.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council. Such complaints should be made through the district council .

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated officer. If the complaint is only notified orally to a councillor, or to the clerk to the council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other nominated officer, they should be advised to address it to the chair of the council.
3. The clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the HR & Staffing committee, which has responsibility for hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting with the HR & Staffing committee and the clerk, and to bring with them a representative if they wish. The role of the clerk is to make a record of the meeting.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the HR & Staffing committee with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The clerk (on behalf of the HR & Staffing committee) shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

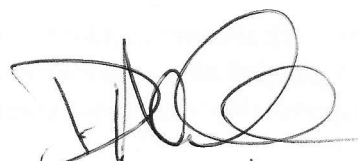
At the Meeting

6. The HR & Staffing committee chair should introduce everyone and explain the procedure, including how any decision will be communicated (e.g. confidentially, or announced at the next full council meeting in public).
7. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the HR & Staffing committee chair and (ii) its members.
8. The HR & Staffing committee chair will then explain the committee's position and questions may be asked by the complainant or representative.
9. The complainant or representative should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

10. The clerk and the complainant (and their representative, if present) should be asked to leave the room while the HR & Staffing committee decides whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, *all* parties shall be invited back.
11. The clerk and the complainant (and representative) should 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 and how it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

12. Wherever possible, the decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days of making the decision, together with details of any action to be taken. The complainant shall also be advised whether the decision will remain confidential or be announced at the next full council meeting in public.
13. In the event of any disagreement arising between the complainant and the HR & Staffing committee about the decision, the complainant can appeal to the HR & Staffing committee to refer the matter to full council for further review, if new information has come to light. If so, the complainant must provide the new information at the time of appeal, to explain why they are appealing the decision.
14. The council will then review the previous decision and the new information, before drawing any conclusion. The council's decision will then be communicated to the complainant and shall be considered final.


02/03/2022