

GRASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

May 2019

Grassington Parish Council:

Council Offices, Town Hall, Grassington,

Skipton North Yorkshire, BD23 5AA

Email: grassingtonclerk@gmail.com

1. **Introduction**
   1. Grassington Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of the service you have received from this Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
   2. This Complaints procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures, not its policy decisions.

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| Type of conduct | Refer to |
| Financial Irregularity | Local elector’s statutory right to object to Council’s audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters the Council may need to consult their auditor. |
| Criminal Activity | The police |
| Member Conduct | A complaint relating to a member’s failure to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct must be submitted to Craven District Council. |
| Employee Conduct | Where the complaint is about an employee of the Council, the matter will be dealt with under the Council’s grievance and disciplinary procedures and the complainant advised accordingly. (If the complaint is about the Clerk, the complaint should be referred to the Chairman). |

* 1. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

1. **Complaints**
   1. All complaints will be deemed to be Informal Complaints unless a written complaint states that it is a formal complaint.
   2. Where a complaint is made about Council administration and procedures, the full Council will deal with the complaint.
   3. A committee may be appointed by the full council only where it considers it necessary to do so and will be composed of 3 members including the Chairman. The Committee will report its finding to the Council where its recommendations will be considered.
   4. The identity of a complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider a complaint. Care will be taken to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand, e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned.
2. **Informal Complaints Procedure**
   1. An informal complaint may be given orally or in writing to the Clerk.
   2. If a complaint is given to a Councillor it is their duty to notify the Clerk or Chairman of the Council.
   3. The Clerk or Chairman of the Council will speak directly to the complainant within 7 working days and will attempt to settle the complaint and to ensure that the complainant feels satisfied that their grievance has been fully considered, taken seriously and acted upon accordingly.
   4. Every effort will be made to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. If the complaint cannot be resolved the Clerk will be informed and he/she will instigate the Formal Complaints Procedure.
3. **Formal Complaints Procedure  
     
    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. The letter must state that a Formal Complaint is being made.
   2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she will be advised to address it to the Chairman of the Council.
   3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 working days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council, or by the committee established for the purpose of hearing the complaint. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example the complaint is to be heard by a committee).
   4. The Council, prior to deciding whether to deal with the complaint or refer it to a committee, will determine the role of the Clerk. It may be that the clerk at the meeting represents the position of the Council. If the clerk puts forward justification for the action or procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the Council or Committee, as they need to determine the matter themselves.
   5. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
   6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council 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**
   7. The Council or Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the meeting in public
   8. The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
   9. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and then (ii) members.
   10. The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council’s position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.
   11. The clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
   12. The clerk and the complainant should 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 parties shall be invited back.
   13. The clerk and the complainant 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 it is likely to be communicated to them.  
         
         
       **After the meeting**
   14. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.  
       If a committee deals with the complaint, any recommendation on a complaint will be ratified and announced at the next meeting of the Council. Within seven working days of the Council accepting the recommendation of the Complaints Committee, the clerk will put the decision in writing to the complainant.

**Contacts**

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| **The Clerk of Grassington Parish Council:**  Louise Close | | **The Chairman of Grassington Parish Council:**  Mr R Charlton | |
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