

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Adopted by CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Adopted 8th January 2020

INTRODUCTION

Croscombe Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to residents of the Parish and to anyone who deals with the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is determined to conduct its business in a fair and equitable manner and in the event that complaints arise, the Council will attempt to resolve them expeditiously and efficiently by correspondence or discussion. Should this prove to be unsuccessful in resolving a manner to everyone's satisfaction, a formal complaint may be made.

This complaints procedure does not apply to: -

Complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council. Such complaints should be made through the District Council.

Complaints of a criminal nature – such complaints should be made to the Police

Complaints about financial irregularities – these should be made to the Council's auditor, whose name and address can be obtained from the Clerk.

DEALING WITH FORMAL COMPLAINTS TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

1. Anyone who is not satisfied with an initial response and wishes to escalate the matter to a formal complaint should do so by letter or e-mail clearly setting out the grounds of the complaint. This should be sent to the Parish Clerk, or, if about the Parish Clerk, to the Parish Council Chairman.
2. The clerk or (or Chairman) shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether it will appear on a public agenda.
3. The complainant shall be invited to attend and address the meeting. They may be accompanied by a representative if they wish. Alternatively, it will be open to the complainant to make written representations should they prefer.
4. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence they wish to present in support of their case. The council shall in turn provide the complaint with copies of any counter-documentation or other evidence they wish to present in response and will do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

5. The council shall consider whether the subject and grounds of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and the press
6. If present, the complainant or representative will be invited to outline the ground for complaint, and then answer any questions which may be posed by councillors or the Parish Clerk.
7. The Parish Clerk (or Chairman) will then respond on behalf of the Council and will answer any questions which may be posed by the complainant, a representative or councillors.
8. The Parish Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant will be given the opportunity to conclude with a summary of their position.
9. The clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will then be asked to leave the room while members decide whether the complaint is a valid one, and if so, what action should be taken to remedy it. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
10. Both the Parish Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will then be asked to return to the room to hear the decision on the complaint which will be announced in public.
11. Should the decision be deferred to a subsequent meeting, both the Parish Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will be invited to attend to hear the decision on the complainant which will be announced in public.

After the Meeting

12. The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
13. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be reconsidered by the full Council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint. This outcome will be final.

Outside the scope of the Policy

14. The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction in respect of parish and town councils except where the council is working jointly with a principle council through a joint committee or is carrying out a function of a principle council.
15. This procedure does not apply to:
 - Complaints about the substance of policy decisions made by the Council
 - Complaints about the conduct of an individual councillor. Those complaints are made to the Monitoring Officer at Mendip District Council.
 - Complaints by an employee of the Council about the Council's actions as an employer. These complaints are dealt with under the Council's grievance procedure.
 - Complaints by members of the council, who would otherwise have a conflict of interest and who have alternative channels of communication.

Contact

The Contact details for the Clerk and Chairman of the Council are published on the Councils website:- www.croscombeparishcouncil.co.uk