



Adopted 19th August 2021
Review date: August 2023

BRIZLINCOTE PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

From time to time the public or our service users have complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council. Sometimes the Council may be in the wrong but on occasions complaints may not be justified. The Council has adopted this Policy to ensure that complainants can feel satisfied that at the very least their grievance has been properly and fully considered.

Where a complainant has made a complaint to an outside regulator such as the Monitoring Officer, External Auditor, Police or Information Commissioner, it will not normally be appropriate for the Council to respond through this Complaints Policy, but to fully cooperate with that regulator.

Informal Complaint

1. When a complaint is received, the complainant usually wants a quick fix and an apology if the Council is at fault. Examples are the late payment of an invoice or not responding to a letter. The Council will put things right as quickly as possible and admit fault if that is the case. If it is unable to help or disagrees with the complaint, it will state clearly why it takes that view.

Formal Complaint

2. If a complainant is not satisfied, or the complaint is too serious for a "quick fix", the complaint will be recorded as a Formal Complaint. The complainant will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing (email is acceptable) to the Parish Clerk, (or if the complaint is about an action of the Parish Clerk, it can be forwarded directly to the Chair).
3. The Parish Clerk (or Chair) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the complaint will be considered and by whom.
4. The Parish Clerk (or Chair) will bring any written formal complaint which cannot be settled to a special meeting of the Council and the Parish Clerk (or Chair) will notify the complainant of the date of the meeting and invite them to attend with a representative if they so wish.
5. Seven clear days prior to the meeting, the complainant will provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to the meeting. The Council will similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.
6. The Council will consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on a complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. The Complainant may opt not to attend but present a report instead and send a representative.
8. The Chair will introduce everyone present and will explain the procedure.
9. The complainant or representative will outline the grounds for complaint
10. Members will ask any questions of the Complainant.

11. If relevant the Parish Clerk or Chairman will explain the Council's position. Members may ask any questions of them.
12. The Parish Clerk and complainant will be offered the opportunity of having a last word (in that order).
13. The Parish Clerk and complainant will leave the room (along with any member who's actions are part of the complaint) while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is required, both parties will be invited back into the room.
14. The parties will be invited back to hear the decision.
15. As soon as possible after the decision has been made this will be communicated in writing to the complainant.