

Freckleton Parish Council

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

A. Introduction

1. This code of practice is designed for those complaints that cannot be resolved by less formal measures or explanation provided to the complainant by the Clerk.
2. Complaints about a Contractor or an employee of the Council (i.e. the Clerk) will be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant will be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally and appropriate action taken, as required.
3. Complaints about a Councillor are subject to a separate statutory procedure. Complainants will be advised to initially write to Councillor Complaints, Town Hall, St. Annes FY8 1LW or email councillorcomplaints@fylde.gov.uk.
Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Standards Committee of the Fylde Borough Council is empowered to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the Parish Council. Therefore, the Standards committee, at FBC, has been notified that the Parish Council has adopted this code of practice.
More information about the procedure for complaining about Councillors can be found at the website of the Standards Board for England at www.standardsboard.gov.uk.
4. At all times, the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.
5. This code of practice is therefore aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or about its procedures.

B. Complaints Procedure

a) 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 proper officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

b) At the Meeting

1. The council 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 council meeting in public
2. Chairman to introduce everyone.
3. Chairman to explain procedure.
4. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
5. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
6. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
7. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
8. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
9. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
10. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

c) After the Meeting

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

This Code of Practice was adopted by the Council at the meeting held on 2nd June 2008, by a resolution recorded as minute Number 7.