



Bretton Parish Council

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Complaints Procedure

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PARISH COUNCIL - This Code is based on nationally recommended guidelines

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. Formal complaints should be sent to the Clerk of the Council at the address above. If the complaint refers to the Clerk, the complaint may be addressed to the Chair of the Council, or the Chair of the relevant committee. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within seven working days and will give details of who will be dealing with the complaint. If requested, an opportunity will be given for the complainant to make verbal representations (and bring a friend when doing so) and offer a date and time when this will occur (within 28 days where possible). Before the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Clerk or nominated officer with any new information or evidence relevant to the complaint and the Clerk or nominated officer shall provide the complainant with new information or evidence relevant to the complaint. The Council will investigate the facts and collate relevant evidence.
3. The complainant must be asked to confirm if he/she wants the complaint to be treated confidentially. Whatever the decision, the Council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
4. The Clerk, Chairperson or nominated officer, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving him/her an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.
5. If a meeting to make verbal representation is requested, the Clerk or nominated officer will explain how the meeting will proceed. The complainant will outline the grounds for the complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by the Clerk, Chairperson or nominated officer. The Clerk or other nominated officer will explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant. The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their respective

positions. The complainant will be advised when a decision about the complaint is likely to be made and when it is likely to be advised to them.

6. Within the time frame agreed above, the Clerk or nominated officer will write to the complainant to confirm whether or not the complaint has been upheld, giving reasons for the decision and details of any action to be taken by the Council if this is appropriate. The notification will include the right of appeal within seven working days if the complainant is not satisfied. Any appeal against the decision will be put to the full Council for further consideration or to be referred to a nominated committee.
7. The Clerk or Chairperson shall report either to the next meeting of the appropriate Committee or the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant. The appropriate Committee or the Council shall 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 shall be announced at the appropriate Committee or the Council meeting in public.