

Ribchester Parish Council

COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS: NO. 3. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This Policy sets out the procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Council's **administration and procedures**. It applies to the Council's employees. Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in 2002. Complaints against **policy decisions** made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council, but issues dealt with previously shall not be re-opened for six months.
2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it would be dealt with promptly.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
4. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman of the Council or the Clerk (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him/her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
5. Where the Clerk or Chairman of the Council receives a written complaint about the Clerk's own actions, he/she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
6. The Clerk or Chairman to the Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
7. The Clerk or Chairman of the Council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standard Board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude other members of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).
8. 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 Council meeting in public.
9. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of the action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is required. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

Approved by Council at its Meeting on 15 November 2004 (Minute No65)