

Bonsall Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

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Complaints Procedure

1.Councillors and employees

This procedure is about the actions and business of the council. Complaints about the actions of an individual Councillor should be referred to the Code of Conduct. Grievances received from an employee of Bonsall Parish Council should be referred in accordance with the Employment and Recruitment Policy.

2. Complaints

2.1 Complaints to Councillors concerning Bonsall Parish Council business will be taken seriously and, if given verbally to the Councillor, the complainant should be requested to be put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Clerk.

2.2 Any complaint received by Bonsall Parish Council must be clearly marked as a complaint otherwise it will be dealt with as a standard communication and will not come under the scope of a complaint. However, the unreasonable complainant behaviour section may still apply.

2.3 Any written complaint received by a Bonsall Parish Councillor, the Clerk, or a member of staff should be sent to the Clerk for consideration. Receipt of the complaint should be acknowledged by the Clerk within 7 days.

2.4 The complaint will be investigated by the Clerk within 21 days taking into account necessary input from councillors and if relevant a response prepared for the next full council meeting occurring after the 21 days.

2.5 Any complaint regarding a third party or contractor will be referred to them and they will be given the opportunity to make any comments.

2.6 Complaints about the Clerk shall be sent directly to the Chairman. The Chairman will report the outcome of any complaints resolved by direct action with the complainant to the next available meeting of the Council explaining the reason for the need to take direct action.

2.7 As with any monthly Bonsall Parish Council meeting the public, including any complainant, will have the right to talk about the complaint during the public session to the time limit enforced at such meetings, subject to any confidentiality aspect that may require public exclusion.

2.8 Bonsall Parish Council may consider that the confidential nature of the complaint warrants the matter being discussed without the presence of the press and the public. In such a case the result will be communicated to the complainant directly. The complainant may also wish to preserve any confidentiality and if the complainant wishes the complaint to be considered in private session then the request and the reasons for confidentiality should be included in the written complaint.

2.9 The Bonsall Parish Councillors will consider the content of the complaint and agree appropriate action and response.

2.10 The complainant will be informed of the Council's response and any resultant actions within 14 days of the meeting.

2.11 Bonsall Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that any of the issues arising from the complaint require further advice being obtained. This may result in further investigation and the reporting of results may be deferred to the next available meeting of Bonsall Parish Council.

2.12 If after consideration of the complaint the Council decides that the complaint is vexatious then the council may decide not to accept repeat complaints of the same nature in the future.

3. Management of unreasonable complainant behaviour

3.1 Bonsall Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints and other correspondence fairly and impartially, and to making its services as accessible as possible.

3.2 Because of the nature or frequency of their contact with Bonsall Parish Council a small number of complainants or other correspondents may hinder the normal workings of the Council. This may be because of unacceptable behaviour in their dealings with the Council, or because of unreasonably persistent contact that distract either Parish Councillors or staff from carrying out their day-to-day Council duties.

3.3 The Parish Council will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants or correspondents. When it occurs, we will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and the integrity of our processes.

4. Appeals

4.1 If on receipt of the Council's response to a complaint, the complainant considers the council has made an error or omission in their decision then the complainant can appeal to the Clerk in writing within 14 days of the council's response, stating the reason for appeal. The appeal will be investigated by the Clerk within 21 days taking into account necessary input from councillors and if relevant a response prepared for the next full council meeting occurring after the 21 days.

4.2 In respect of any complaint against the Clerk the appeal should be sent to the Chairman who will consider the appeal by direct action with the complainant for the next available meeting of the Council explaining the reason for the need to take direct action.

4.3 If a complainant considers that their complaint and its subsequent appeal has not been properly dealt with then it should be noted that unlike District or County Councils, there is currently no external agency or government body which can investigate a Parish Council complaint if you are dissatisfied with the resolution, however any complainant should be assured that it is the Parish Council's Policy to try and resolve all complaints to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.