

CLOPHILL PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Clophill Parish Council takes very seriously all complaints made against its employees, and complaints regarding its administration and procedures.

Councillors are covered by a Code of Conduct and any complaints about an individual Councillors conduct must in the first instance be made to the Monitoring Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council, for assessment by their Standards Committee.

Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council (note Standing Orders state that issues shall not be re-opened within six months unless a motion to do so is approved at a Council meeting by two thirds of the Councillors present).

Complaints regarding financial matters should in the first instance be referred to the Clerk, who is unable to resolve the matter, should advise the complainant of the Local elector's statutory right to object to the Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998.

With complaints involving criminal activity, the complainant will be referred to the Police.

Oral Complaint

Complaints of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council shall be dealt with as follows.

If the complaint is made orally to a councillor or the Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk of the Council or if preferred to the Chairman of the Council and to be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

Written Complaint

1 On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman of the Council (except where the complaint is about his or her actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without notifying the person complained against and giving him/her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to settle the complaint at this stage.

Where The Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about the Clerks own action, he/she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

2 The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

3 The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk to the Council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standards Committee 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 any member of the public or the press or deferred on appropriate advice received).

4 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.

5 As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicate in writing to the complainant.

6 A 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 necessary. The Complaint shall be dealt with after the advice has been received.