



## **BRADFORD ON TONE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Complaints Policy and Procedure Approved by Council 16 June 2026**

#### **Introduction**

1. From time-to-time members of the public have complaints about matters relating to the Parish Council.
2. A parish council is defined as a local council and is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
3. Where the complaint is about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council the complaint should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council.
4. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Parish Council will be referred back to the Council.
5. Complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures (or lack of) will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and procedure document.

#### **Making a Complaint**

6. It is preferable, but not essential, that complaints are made in writing (including email) to the Clerk, or if the Clerk is implicated in the complaint to the Chair of the Council.

#### **Initial Handling of the Complaint**

7. If the complaint is made orally e.g. by telephone or in person, the person receiving the complaint will make a written record the date and time the complaint is made, the name and contact details of the complainant, the details of the complaint
8. If the complaint is made in writing a written acknowledgement or receipt of the complaint will be sent. In the case of a complaint pertaining to the General Data Protection Regulations the acknowledgement will be sent within 30 days of receiving the complaint.
9. Anonymous complaints will not be processed.
10. Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint informally.
11. Receipt of the complaint and the resolution will be reported at the next Council meeting (anything information that may identify the complainant will be redacted)

## **Formal Consideration**

### **Preparing for a Meeting**

12. If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally it will be referred to a Council meeting - this may be a special meeting called specifically to deal with the complaint.
13. The complainant will be given a minimum of 2 weeks notice of the meeting date
14. The meeting will be held in accordance with legislation governing the calling and conduct of local council meetings. (including the publication of an agenda and minutes)
15. The Complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and to bring with them a friend / support person
16. Seven working days (i.e.. not Saturday, Sunday or bank holidays) before the meeting the complainant shall provide the council with any documents or evidence that they may refer to at the meeting. Similarly the Council shall provide the complainant with any documents or evidence that they may refer to at the meeting.
17. Arrangements may need to be put in place
  - a) for an independent person to make the meeting arrangements and clerk the meeting
  - b) for independent advice to be provided to the Council prior to the meeting and during the meeting

### **At the Meeting**

18. The Chair will open the meeting and any routine business e.g. apologies, approval of minutes will be dealt with
19. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. The matter shall be decided by resolution and vote (in the usual way)
20. The Council's task will be establish whether there is a factual basis to the complaint and any action that should be taken.
21. The Chair will make the introductions and explain the procedure to be followed:
  - The complainant should outline the grounds for their complaint
    - The Clerk may ask the complainant questions
    - Councillors may ask the complainant questions
  - The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the council's position
    - The complainant may ask the Clerk questions
    - Councillors may ask the Clerk questions
  - The Clerk should be offered the opportunity to summarise the Council's position
  - The Complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position
  - The Clerk and the complainant (and their representative should be asked to leave the room whilst Councillors decide whether or the grounds for the complaint have been substantiated. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back
  - The Clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision, but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they

should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when and how it is likely to be communicated to them.

**Communicating the decision**

- 22.** The decision and any actions should be confirmed in writing to the complainant and the Clerk within seven working days of the decision being made

Agreed