

BAGNALL PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – OVERVIEW

Bagnall Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the council will be referred to the council for consideration.
2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of an employee of the council or between an employee and the council as an employer. These matters are dealt with in the council's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.
3. If a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors can be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
4. The appropriate time for influencing council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of council meetings.

If you are unhappy with a council decision, you may raise your concerns with the council, but Standing Orders prevent the council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the clerk or a councillor. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing or emailing the Clerk. If a complaint is received orally the complainant will be asked to put this in writing. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.

6. Wherever possible the clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible the clerk will endeavour to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the chairman of the council who will report your complaint to the full council.
8. On receipt of a written complaint the clerk (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions) or the chair (if the complaint relates to the clerk) will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant.
9. The clerk or the chairman will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the council.
10. The clerk (or chairman) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the council.
11. The clerk (or chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the council. The clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the council orally.
12. The clerk or the chairman of the council will notify you within 21 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the council proposes to take because of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the 21 working days timescale may have to be extended. If so, you will be informed.)
13. The council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.
14. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
15. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.