

Complaints Procedure

This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Hepworth Parish Council's administration, procedures or employees. Councillors are covered by a Code of Conduct. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council [but note paragraph 7b of the Council's Standing Orders which says that issues shall not be re-opened for six months without a special resolution].

Verbal Complaints:

- If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by a Hepworth Parish Council employee is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk to the Council, 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 to the Council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
- If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council, he or she should be advised to put it to the Chair of Hepworth Parish Council.

Written Complaints:

- On receipt of a written complaint the Chair or the Clerk to the Council (except where the complainant is about his or 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 or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage. The complainant will receive an immediate acknowledgment of their complaint, advised of the Parish Council's complaint handling policy and kept updated with regard to the timing of a reply.
- Where the Clerk to the Council receives a written complaint about their own actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Hepworth Parish Council. The Clerk will be notified and given an opportunity to comment prior to a decision being reached regarding the complaint.
- The Clerk to the Council or Chair of Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
- The Clerk or Chair of Hepworth Parish 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 is related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standard Board proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place. When this situation applies, a hearing may prejudice those proceedings and the complaint will have to be deferred or heard under Exempt Business with members of the public or the press excluded.)**
- 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.
- As soon as possible after the decision has been made, the decision and nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- 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 at the next meeting after the advice has been received.