

CROMFORD PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 Statement

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

1.2 Scope

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how a Council employee has dealt with your concerns.

1.3 Exclusion to the Policy

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- a) Complaints between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.
- b) Complaints against Councillors.
Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on *(insert date)*. If a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Derbyshire Dales District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Derbyshire Dales District Council.

2. How to make a Complaint

2.1 Council Meetings

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making, is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on an Item. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the Item is to be discussed. Your communication must be received five working days prior to a meeting to be included on the Agenda, excluding the day of the meeting, weekends and Public Holidays.

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.

2.2 The Parish Clerk

You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or e-mailing the Clerk. Contact details are provided below.

Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

Please note however, the Clerk works part-time, so this may not always be possible.

2.3 Alternative route to make a complaint

If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chair of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.

3 What happens next?

3.1 The Clerk or the Chair of the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from Members of the Council.

3.2 The Clerk or the Chair of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint.

In exceptional cases it may be necessary to extend the 20 working days timescale. If this is the case you will be advised and kept informed.

4 Escalation

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the next available Full Council Meeting. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint, usually within eight weeks.

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.

Sian Bacon- Clerk

Cllr M Birch – Council Chair