

# **BLAWITH & SUBBERTHWAITE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

The Parish Council's aim is to deal with all complaints impartially, objectively and as quickly as possible. All complaints must be processed in the first instance through the Parish Clerk. In regard to complaints, for example, about services or administration the Clerk may respond directly to the complainant in order to address the complaint. However, should it not be possible to resolve the complaint directly, the complaint will be processed as follows.

### **Complaints about Parish Council Procedures, Services, Administration.**

#### **Procedure:**

##### **Stage 1:**

- 1.1 The complaint must be submitted to the Parish Clerk in writing.
- 1.2 The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and obtain any further information needed. from the complainant, Councillors, Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) or any other relevant parties as necessary and then advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee established for the purposes of hearing the complaint. The Council will aim to respond as quickly as possible but this may take up to 6 weeks.
- 1.3 At any discussions at a Parish Council meeting, the Council can consider whether the matter warrants exclusion of the public and press. All decisions will be minuted
- 1.4 Within the advised time, no longer than 6 weeks, the Council will send the complainant a full written reply, or inform the complainant if the reply will take longer, explaining the reason for the delay.
- 1.5 Following the Council's reply, If the Council does not hear from the complainant again within 14 days, the complaint will be closed. A record of the complaint will be held for 6 years.

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#### **Stage 2:**

2.1 Should the complainant feel the matter has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner the reasons must be submitted to the Clerk in writing and stage 1 of the complaints procedure will be repeated.

2.2 If no satisfactory outcome is reached the complainant may refer the matter to the Council with ultimate responsibility (generally either South Lakeland District Council or Cumbria County Council depending on the service area). They would normally only look at a complaint once the local stages have been completed.

#### **Complaints about individual councillors**

If a member of the public believes that a councillor is in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct a complaint may be lodged with the Monitoring Officer at South Lakeland District Council.

#### **Complaints about the council's financial affairs**

If a member of the public wishes to raise a complaint regarding the Council's finances it should be lodged with the Audit Commission.

#### **Complaints under the Freedom of Information Act**

Complaints about not releasing information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 can be referred to the Information Commissioner.