

Lanchester Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure will deal with complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council. Complaints against an employee, a Councillor or policy decisions will be managed under different arrangements.

Lanchester Parish Council takes seriously any complaints made against them and will always seek to improve and review the way that services are delivered.

2. Complaints Committee

Complaints about the administration or procedure of the Council will be dealt with by the Complaints Committee. The Complaints Committee will be appointed annually and made up of six members of the council and convened as and when necessary.

The Complaints Committee will report its conclusions of a hearing at the next Parish Council meeting.

3. Making a Complaint

Complaints about the Council's administration or procedures should be made in writing to the Clerk.

The Clerk will acknowledge in writing the receipt of the complaint within three working days and try to settle the complaint directly. If the complaint is resolved in this manner, the clerk will report this to the next meeting of the council.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved directly, within seven working days of its receipt a date will be set for a complaints committee hearing and the complainant will be advised in writing of the date.

The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing along with a representative of their choice should they wish.

Not less than seven clear working days of the hearing, the complainant will provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they will wish to refer to at the meeting. The council will also provide the

complainant with copies of any documentation that they will rely on at the meeting.

4. The Hearing

The Council must first decide if the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the press and public.

The Chair will introduce everyone and explain the procedure to be followed.

The complainant (or their representative) will outline their grounds for complaint and members of the committee may ask any questions of the complainant.

If relevant the Clerk or other officer will explain the Council's position and members of the Committee may ask any questions.

The Clerk or other officer followed by the complainant will be given the opportunity to offer final comments. Following this all parties will be asked to leave the room whilst Members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been made. If clarification is needed on any point all parties will be invited back to the room.

The Clerk or other officer and the complainant will be invited back to hear the decision or to be advised when the decision will be made.

5. Following the hearing

The decision of the hearing shall be confirmed in writing within seven working days detailing any action to be taken.