



Berryfields Parish Council

Complaints Policy

1. Policy Purpose

This policy sets out the procedure Berryfields Parish Council will adopt when dealing with comments, compliments and complaints about the Council's administration, procedures or services.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints about Council administration or procedures, and how Council employees have dealt with concerns.

It does not cover complaints about:

- The conduct of Parish Councillors under the Council's Code of Conduct (these should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Buckinghamshire Council).
- Matters covered by separate statutory complaint systems.

3. Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public about the standard of service, action or inaction, or behaviours of the Council or its staff.

4. Making a Complaint

If a complaint about procedures, administration or employee actions is made verbally to a Councillor or staff member, a written record will be made.

The complainant will be asked to put their complaint in writing (letter or email) to:

Parish Clerk
Berryfields Parish Council
Email: clerk@berryfields-pc.gov.uk

Where possible, complaints should be made within 14 days of the issue arising. A refusal to put the complaint in writing will not automatically prevent investigation, but written detail is preferred.

5. If the Complaint Involves the Clerk

If the complaint relates to the Parish Clerk, the complainant should address it in writing to the Chair of the Council.

6. Handling Complaints

On receiving a written complaint, the Clerk (or Chair, if the complaint concerns the Clerk) will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant — after first notifying any person who is the subject of the complaint and allowing them to comment.

Efforts should be made to resolve complaints at this initial informal stage where possible.

7. Reporting and Review

A periodic report summarising complaints, compliments and comments will be presented to a meeting of Full Council to highlight issues and improvements where needed.

8. Linked Procedures

Complaints that relate to Grievance or Disciplinary matters will be handled under the Council's separate Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

9. Confidentiality

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.

10. Remedies and Payments

The Council may decide whether circumstances merit any payment or remedial action for loss caused by maladministration.

Legal advice (and auditor advice where appropriate) must be obtained before any payment is authorised.

11. Timescales

As soon as possible after the decision is made (and in any event no later than 10 working days after the relevant meeting), the complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome and any actions the Council will take.

12. Deferred Complaints

The Council may decide to defer dealing with any complaint where further advice is considered necessary. The complaint will be dealt with at the next suitable meeting after receipt of the advice.

13. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered, and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received

Document Control

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Lead Officer: Parish Clerk

Overseeing Body: Full Council