

Beetham Parish Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Written by :	Checked by :	Approved by :
Date :	Date :	Date :

HISTORY PAGE

Version Number	Comments	Date Issued
1	First issue of procedure	April 2008
2	(a) Updated to standard "Policy Document" format (b) Addition of statement to define procedure if complaint is against one or a named group of Councillors	January 2009

SUMMARY

Complaints about the activities of the Parish Council can be classified into two types :

- 1) Complaints about poor administration and procedures
- 2) Complaints about the conduct of a Councillor or a group of Councillors

This document defines the procedure which should be followed by the Parish Council if an individual or group wishes to submit a formal complaint regarding poor administration or procedures relating to an area for which the Parish Council is responsible.

If the complaint is about the conduct of a Councillor, or a group of Councillors, then the complaint should be sent directly to the South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) Monitoring Officer for consideration by the Standards Committee. The Parish Council does not deal with such complaints.

**Procedure for Dealing with Complaints about Poor Administration
and/or Procedures**

- 1) Where there is a complaint against the Council's procedures/administration, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing. This should be lodged with the Clerk or other nominated proper officer or, alternatively, with the Chairman of the Council.
- 2) The complaint should be acknowledged by the Clerk, who should advise the complainant when the complaint will be heard by the Council, or by any committee established for this purpose. The complainant should be invited to attend the Council hearing along with any representative.
- 3) Documentation or other evidence relevant to the complaint should be lodged with the Council by the complainant at least seven days prior to the hearing. Similarly, any documentation to be used by the Council in dealing with the complaint should be provided for the complainant.
- 4) At the hearing, the Council must first consider whether there are grounds for excluding the public and the press. If so, this must be announced in public.
- 5) The Chairman should then introduce everyone present and explain the procedure.
- 6) The complainant, or representative, should then outline the grounds for complaint and may be asked questions by members.
- 7) The Clerk, or other proper officer, may then explain the Council's position and may be asked questions by members.
- 8) Final representations may then be made to the meeting, first by the Clerk and then by the complainant.
- 9) The complainant (and representative, where relevant) should then be asked to retire from the room whilst members consider their decision, although they should **both** be asked to return where clarification of any relevant point is necessary.
- 10) The complainant (and representative, where relevant) should be asked to return to the room to hear the members' decision on the complaint, or otherwise advised when this will be made.
- 11) The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days of the meeting at which a decision is made, together with details of any action to be taken.