


## Congresbury Parish Council

### Complaints policy

Date of adoption by Parish Council	May 13 <sup>th</sup> 2019	Next review date	May 2020
Signature of Chairman of Parish Council		Policy reference	POL-005

#### 1. Introduction

This complaints policy is intended to ensure that complaints by members of the public about the Council's actions, or lack of action, or standard of service are dealt with promptly and effectively. The object of the procedure is to put things right when they have gone wrong and ensure that mistakes do not recur in the future.

#### 2. What is not covered by the policy?

This policy does not apply to complaints:

- About the substance of policy decisions made by the Council (although members of the public may make comments or ask questions during the public participation session during every Council and committee meeting);
- About the conduct of an individual councillor; these should be made to the Monitoring Officer at North Somerset Council;
- By an employee or volunteer of the Council about the Council's actions as an employer, such matters will be dealt with under the Council's grievance procedure;
- Which are deemed to be criminal; these should be reported to the Police in the first instance.

#### 3. Procedure for handling complaints

1. Complaints about the Council's administration and procedures should be made initially to the Clerk to the Council, and will be dealt with initially by the Clerk. If the complainant is unwilling to approach the Clerk a complaint may be made to the Chairman of the Council. Complaints may be made in writing, by email, by phone or in person.

2. Any written complaint received by a Congresbury Parish Councillor, the Clerk, or a member of staff or volunteer should be promptly copied to all councillors and the Clerk for consideration and receipt of the complaint acknowledged, by the Clerk, within 7 days.
3. The complaint will be investigated by the Clerk within 21 days taking into account considered input from councillors and a response prepared for the next Full Council meeting.
4. Any complaint regarding a third party (for example a contractor employed by the Parish Council) will be passed to the third party and they will be given the opportunity to make any comments.
5. The Clerk or the Chairman,( where the complaint is in respect to the Clerk), will report the outcome of any complaints resolved by direct action with the complainant to the next available meeting of the Full Council explaining the reason for the need to take direct action. If the Committee considers that a complaint alleges misconduct by an employee or volunteer the decision on the complaint may be deferred until the allegation has been dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
6. As with any monthly Full Parish Council meeting the public (including any complainant), will have the right to talk to the complaint during the public participation session to the time limit enforced at such meetings. The Parish Council may consider that the circumstances of a complaint warrant the matter being discussed without the presence of the press and the public. In such a case the result will be communicated to the complainant directly and to the general public through the minutes of the meeting.
7. Congresbury Parish Council will consider the content of the complaint and agree appropriate action and response. The complainant will be informed of any actions and response within 14 days of the meeting.
8. Congresbury Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that any of the issues arising from the complaint require further advice being obtained. Any advice received will be referred to the next available meeting.
9. Where a complaint is upheld the Clerk should report to a subsequent meeting of the Full Council what action has been taken to ensure that any issue does not recur.

#### 4. Unacceptable behaviour

Congresbury Parish Council will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants or correspondents. When it occurs, we will take any proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff/volunteers and the integrity of our processes way. If a complainant or correspondent attends the public meetings of the Parish Council and is deemed by those Councillors present to be affecting the normal running of the meeting then the Chairman will have the right to request the individual concerned to leave the meeting, as outlined in the Standing Orders.