

Ribble Banks Parish Council
 Complaints Procedure
 Adopted 12-11-2013

The Parish Council is determined to conduct its business in a fair and equitable manner and in the event that complaints arise, the Council will attempt to resolve them expeditiously and efficiently by correspondence or discussion. Should this prove to be unsuccessful in resolving a matter to everyone's satisfaction, a formal complaint may be made.

Who to complain to:

Type of complaint	Complain to
Financial irregularity	The Council's Auditor
Criminal activity	The Police
Member's conduct	The Monitoring Officer of Craven District Council
Lack of action by the Council, or poor standard of service	The Clerk
Employee Conduct	The Clerk or, if about the Clerk, the Chairman

1. First stage: *Informal Complaints*

- 1.1 Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Clerk (or Chairman if appropriate) and must include the following:
- The nature of the complaint in detail
 - The remedy sought
- 1.2 The Clerk (or Chairman) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, usually within 10 working days.
- 1.3 In all cases the Clerk will send a copy of the written complaint to all members of the Council.
- 1.4 The Chairman or Vice-Chairman in consultation with the Clerk will contact the complainant in an effort to reach an amicable solution to the complaint. If an amicable solution is reached then details of it shall be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

2. Second Stage: *Formal Complaints*

- 2.1 Anyone who is not satisfied with an initial response and wishes to escalate the matter to a formal complaint should do so by letter or e-mail clearly setting out the grounds of the complaint and an indication of actions requested in response. This should be sent to the Clerk or, if about the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Council.
- 2.2 The Clerk (or Chairman) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, usually within 10 working days.
- 2.3 The Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council will investigate your complaint and will offer you the opportunity of a meeting to discuss your complaint and obtain more information.

- 2.4 The Chairman or Vice-Chairman will write to you within 30 working days of your complaint to inform you of the outcome of the investigation. If your complaint is upheld you will receive a written apology and information about any action which will be taken.

3. Third stage: *Consideration by full Council*

- 3.1 Anyone who is not satisfied with an initial response and wishes to escalate the matter to a formal complaint should do so by letter or e-mail clearly setting out the grounds of the complaint and an indication of actions requested in response. This should be sent to the Clerk or, if about the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Council.
- 3.2 The Clerk (or Chairman) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, usually within 10 working days, and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council (or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints). The complainant will be advised whether there are grounds for the complaint to be treated as confidential or whether it will appear on a public agenda.
- 3.3 The complainant will be invited to attend and address the meeting. They may be accompanied by a representative if they wish. Alternatively, it will be open to the complainant to make written representations should they prefer.
- 3.4 Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant will provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence they wish to present in support of their case. The Council shall in turn provide the complainant with copies of any counter-documentation or other evidence they wish to present in response and will do so promptly, allowing the complainant sufficient opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the meeting

- 3.5 The Council will consider whether the subject and grounds of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the press and public.
- 3.6 If present, the complainant or representative will be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and then answer any questions which may be posed by councilors or the Clerk.
- 3.7 The Clerk (or Chairman) will then respond on behalf of the Council and will answer any questions which may be posed by the complainant, a representative of councilors.
- 3.8 The Clerk (or Chairman) and then the complainant will be given the opportunity to conclude with a summary of their position.
- 3.9 The Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will then be asked to leave the room while members decide whether the complaint is a valid one and, if so, what action should be taken to remedy it. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties will be invited back.
- 3.10 The Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will then be asked to return to the room to hear the decision on the complaint which will be announced in public.
- 3.11 Should the decision be deferred to a subsequent meeting, both the Clerk (or Chairman) and the complainant (and representative if present) will be invited to attend to hear the decision on the complaint which will be announced in public.

After the Meeting

3.12 The decision will be confirmed to the complainant in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.