

Branston & Mere Parish Council Complaints Procedure.

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant committee as appropriate, for consideration.
2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council. Any complaint that a councillor may have breached the adopted code should be referred to North Kesteven District Council, which is responsible for investigating and deciding code of conduct complaints relating to parish councillors in their area.
3. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or to the Clerk, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant.
4. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/e-mail) to the Clerk at 173 Lincoln Road, Branston, Lincoln, LN4 1NS. The complaint will be dealt with within 21 days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is.
5. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should be advised to write to the Chairman.
6. a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complaint is about her own actions) or Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
b) Where the Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.
7. The Clerk or Chairman will report any complaint disposed of, by direct action with the complainant, to the next meeting of the Council.
8. The Clerk or Chairman will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.
9. Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.
10. 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.
11. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
12. 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.