Billing Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1. Billing Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred to the Council for consideration.

3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

   (a) Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

   (b) Complaints against Councillors which are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Council's adopted code of conduct should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at West Northamptonshire Council.

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Clerk in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from reopening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

5. If a complaint is about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

6. You will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/e-mail) to the Parish Clerk at Billing Parish Council, Bernard Weston Pavilion, Off Penfold Lane, Great Billing, Northampton, NN3 9EF. Telephone: 01604 785447 email: clerk@billing-pc.gov.uk and the complaint will be dealt with within 14 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.

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7. If you prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example,) you should address your complaint to the Chair of the Council.

8.

(a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with you. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her 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 Clerks actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Council. The Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

9. A periodic report will be tabled at a meeting of Council on the outcome of any complaints and to bring to members attention any comments and or compliments.

10. Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

11. 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.

12. The Council may consider in the circumstances of any complaint whether to make any without liability payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss because of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from the Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.

13. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) you will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

14. 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.