

## FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

### Handling Complaints – Policy & Procedure Policy

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

The appropriate time for influencing Parish Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Parish Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Parish Council 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 session at Parish Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Parish Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Parish Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Parish Council from re-opening 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.

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under this complaints procedure. This procedure is not appropriate for use where a complaint is made against the conduct of an individual.

The Parish Council should consider engaging other procedures or bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

- **Financial irregularity:** Refer to the local elector's statutory right to object to the Parish Council's audit of accounts as per s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Parish Council may need to consult its auditor and/or the Audit Commission.
- ii) **Criminal activity:** Refer to the Police.
- iii) **Member conduct:** A complaint relating to a Member's failure to comply with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct should be dealt with in accordance with Brewood and Coven Parish Council's Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Parish Council in July 2012, as prescribed by the Localism Act 2011.
- iv) **Employee conduct:** Refer to the Staffing Committee to be dealt with under the Parish Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

### Procedure

To be used in cases of complaint by the public about the Parish Council's procedures and their implementation and administration.

You may make your complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You will be asked to put your complaint in writing.

Wherever possible, the Clerk will endeavour to resolve your complaint immediately. An apology will be issued if appropriate. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint, the Clerk will normally attempt to acknowledge it within five working days. The outcome will be reported at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

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If the complaint cannot be resolved, the Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council will investigate further, obtaining additional information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Parish Council.

The Clerk or the Chairman will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action, if any, the Parish Council intends to take as a result of your complaint. In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended; if it is, you will be kept informed.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for it to be referred to the full Parish Council. The Parish Council shall 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 a full Parish Council meeting in public.

Usually within eight weeks you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint. The outcome of the investigation will be announced at a full meeting of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council's decision shall be final.