

# **BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

*This Code of Practice was adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2003, and amended at its Meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011.*

#### **Introduction**

Please note that this Code of Practice covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Parish Council.

Complaints about the Clerk should be made to the Chairman of the Council and will be dealt with as an employment issue.

Complaints about the actions of any Councillor(s) that may be in breach the Council's Code of Conduct should be made to Mendip District Council's Monitoring Officer.

#### **Before any Meeting to hear a Complaint**

1. The complainant shall be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, he/she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with him/her such representative as desired.
5. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which he/she wishes to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting.

#### **At the Meeting**

6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press, and act accordingly. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman shall introduce everyone.
8. The Chairman shall explain the agreed procedure.
9. The Complainant (or his/her representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint.
10. Members may ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Clerk shall explain the Council's position.

12. Members may ask any question of the Clerk.
13. The Clerk and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of the last word (in this order).
14. The Clerk (if the complaint concerns his/her administration) and the complainant shall be asked to leave the room while the Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back).
15. The Clerk and the complainant shall return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.

### **After the Meeting**

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