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Complaints Policy

Date	Version	Comment	Approval Status
13/10/2023	0.1	Initial draft for comment	Draft
24/10/2023	1.0	Approved at Council Meeting minute ref 8.3	Approved

Overview

This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Barmouth Town Council's administration and procedures.

a. When to use this policy

- Complaints about the way Barmouth Town Council conducts its business.
- Complaints about Barmouth Town Council's employees.
- Complaints about the CCTV system can be made with this policy.

b. When not to use this policy

- Complaints against Councillors are covered by Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council [but note paragraph 28 of the Council's Standing Orders which says that issues shall not be re-opened for six months].

Terminology: For ease of reading this policy will use the term "Clerk" to refer to the Clerk to Barmouth Town Council and "Chair" to refer to the Mayor/Chair of the Council.

Policy Detail

1. Informal complaint (verbal)

If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk they should be advised to put it to the Chair.

2. Formal complaint (written)

Formal complaints should be made on the form given in Appendix A and sent by post or email to the Clerk or Chair at the address at the top of this policy.

On receipt of a written complaint the Chair or the Clerk (except where the complaint is about their own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

Where the Clerk or the Chair receives a written complaint about the Clerk's own actions, they shall refer the complaint to the Chair. The Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

The Clerk or Chair shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

The Clerk or Chair shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standard Board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

Appendix A – Complaint Form

Name:	
Address & Postcode:	
Email:	
Contact Phone Number:	

About your concern/complaint (Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

1. Subject you are complaining about:
2. What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do?
3. Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected.
4. What do you think should be done to put things right?
5. When did you first become aware of the problem?
6. If it is more than 6 months since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to the address at the top of this policy.