

Cross Roads Parish Council

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Cross Roads Parish Council aims to operate in a way that is open, transparent and fair and to provide efficient and appropriate services to the community of Cross Roads.

This policy is intended to assist local residents to deal with complaints against actions of the Council's staff or its administration.

The Council aims to learn from complaints and take appropriate steps to improve services.

The Council welcomes feedback from the public at all times.

The Complaints Procedure does not cover:

- complaints about the conduct of Councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Bradford Council.
- where a person wishes to disagree with a Council decision or policy or makes a request under the Freedom of Information Act, whereby there are alternative processes for representation in place.
- anonymous complaints.

To make a Complaint.

In the first instance complaints should be submitted to the Clerk either by email, telephone or letter. The Clerk will try to resolve the complaint informally in a timely manner. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. In the event that this informal process does not satisfy the Complainant, Cross Roads Parish Council has a formal complaints procedure that should be followed.

Formal Complaints handled by the Parish Council.

A formal written letter of complaint must be sent to the Clerk or if the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chair of the Parish Council, covering as much detail as possible and enclosing any relevant supporting documentation.

The Clerk or Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

If appropriate, such complaints will be heard by the Complaints Committee established by the Parish council which has authority to deal with complaints on its behalf.

The Complaints Committee will consist of 3 councillors, one of whom will be appointed as Chair. No councillors who have already been involved in the matter will be appointed to the committee. The Council (and/or Committee with delegated power) may appoint an independent person to the committee if it resolves to do so, as an independent impartial arbitrator.

The Complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered by the Complaints Committee, giving at least 10 working days' notice of the Committee meeting.

The Complainant will be invited to attend this meeting and bring one other person for support, if they wish.

If the Complaints Committee deem it necessary, it may request additional particulars of the complaint or relevant matters in advance of the meeting. The Complainant will provide copies of any documentation or evidence relied on 5 working days prior to the meeting, as will the Parish Council.

The decision of the Complaints Committee, which will be final, will be confirmed in writing within 7 working days of the meeting together with details of any action to be taken.

Repeated or Vexatious Complaints

A small percentage of complaints may be persistent or complain in a way that appears to be obsessive, harassing or repetitious.

This will require a disproportionate amount of resources and can sometimes act in a manner that it unacceptably stressful.

Whilst everyone has the right to make a legitimate complaint, they are not entitled to do so in a way that is unreasonable, or which has the effect of intimidating or harassing.

A vexatious or persistent complaint can be characterised in a number of ways:

- Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious.
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.

A Complainant can only be considered vexatious once a decision has been passed to that effect by resolution of the Council giving the reason and scope. This will be confirmed in writing to the complainant.

Adopted by Cross Roads Parish Council at the meeting held on 18th June 2025