

KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This document sets out procedures for dealing with complaints about Keswick Town Council's administration or procedures.

Complaints about an employee of the Council will be dealt with as an employment matter and complainants can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally as such and that appropriate action will be taken as required. Complaints about a councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Committee and complainants are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer at Allerdale Borough Council for further information (contact details available on request from the Town Clerk). Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council, however, paragraph 12 of the Council's Standing Orders states that issues shall not be re-opened for six months.

Procedure

1. If a complaint is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk to the Council, he/she should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, he/she may put it to the Chairman of the Council.
2. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council.
3. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
4. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.
5. At the meeting, the Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
6. At the meeting, the following procedure shall be followed:
 - i) Chairman to introduce everyone
 - ii) Chairman to explain procedure
 - iii) Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for the complaint
 - iv) Councillors to ask any question of the complainant
 - v) If relevant, Clerk or other proper officer to explain the Council's position
 - vi) Councillors to ask any question of the Clerk or other proper officer
 - vii) Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
 - viii) Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.
 - ix) Clerk or other proper officer and the complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision to be made.
7. The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.