



INGLEBY BARWICK TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Reviewed & Adopted by Ingleby Barwick Town Council on 17th May 2017
Date for next Review.....Annual Meeting May 2018

Ingleby Barwick Town Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. The Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in Ingleby Barwick or are visitors to the locality, within both the limits of time and budget. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about the Town Council's administration and procedures. **It is not appropriate for complaints regarding the conduct of individual employees of the Council or for complaints regarding the conduct of individual Members. Such complaints will be addressed within other measures put in place by the Town Council.**
3. A complaint is defined by the Town Council as **'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council'**.
4. All complaints will be:
 - Taken seriously.
 - Recorded and kept in a 'Register of Complaints'.
 - Dealt with promptly and in accordance with the 'Complaints Procedure'.
 - Investigated to the level required.
5. Confidentiality. The identity of a complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider a complaint. The Town Council will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand (e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned).

6. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
- complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under separate procedures.
 - complaints against Councillors. Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Town Council on 21st November 2012 and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Town Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
7. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on the matter. You may do this by writing to the 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 section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the 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.

Procedure

Stage 1

8. You may make your complaint about the Town Council's administration or procedures to the Clerk. You may do this by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The Clerk's contact details are set out below.
9. Initially, complaints will be dealt with by the Clerk who wherever possible, will try to resolve the complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge the complaint within 7 working days.

10. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council, in writing or by email, who will report your complaint to the Clerk and to the Town Council. The Chairman or Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your complaint. The Chairman's contact details are set out below.
11. The Clerk and/or the Chairman will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant and/or from staff or Members of the Town Council.
12. The Clerk or the Chairman will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (if any) is proposed to be taken as a result of the complaint. In exceptional cases the 20 working days timescale may have to be extended in order to take legal or other advice. If it is, you will be kept informed.
13. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full Council.

Stage 2

Before the Meeting

14. The complainant will be advised as to when the matter will be considered by the Town Council. The complainant shall also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way.
15. The complainant shall be invited to attend the meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
16. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Town Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in appropriate time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

17. The Town 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.
18. The Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
19. The complainant (and/or their representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Chairman, Members and the Clerk.
20. The Chairman (and/or the Clerk) will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and Members.
21. The Chairman (and/or the Clerk) and the complainant will be offered the opportunity to make any final comments.
22. The complainant (and their representative) will be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary the complainant (and their representative) shall be invited back.
23. The complainant will be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

24. The decision will be confirmed in writing within ten working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Contact Details:

Town Clerk
Ingleby Barwick Town Council
Barwick Lodge
Ingleby Way
Ingleby Barwick
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 0RH

Email: town.clerk@inglebybarwicktowncouncil.org.uk

Councillor Stefan Barnes,
Chairman/Town Mayor,
Ingleby Barwick Town Council,
17 Rowallane Gardens,
Ingleby Barwick,
Stockton-on-Tees,
TS17 0YQ

Email: stefanbarnes1@gmail.com