

Raglan Community Council Complaints Handling Procedure Adopted in May 2015

1. Raglan Community Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the community. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from Raglan Community 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 the council shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. You can express your concern in any of the ways below.
 - *You can ask for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.*

 - *You can get in touch with our central complaint contact point on Tel: 01873 832017 if you want to make your complaint over the phone.*

 - *You can use the form on our the council website at www.raglancc.org.uk*

 - *You can e-mail us at raglanclerk@aol.com*

 - *You can write a letter to us at the following address Ty-Nant, Old Trap Road, Gilwern, Monmouthshire, NP7 0HW.*

3. When you express your concerns or complain to us, the council will usually respond in the way as explained below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and the council will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

4. Also, this policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In this circumstance, you should contact the Clerk to the council. Contact details are in para 18 below.

5. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Raglan Community Councils administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

6. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

6.1. complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or by the council a Council employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

6.2. complaints against Councillors. Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 27 May 2015 and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Monmouthshire County Council.

7. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a 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 of the council.

8. You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out in para 18 below.

You can also contact: **The Public Services, Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ**

9. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days to advise you how the council intend to deal with your complaint.

9.1 The council will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements.

9.2 The council will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

9.3 *The council will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.*

10. Normally, the council will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within six months. This may be extended should the council need to consider complaints beyond this. This is because it's better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

11. If your complaint covers more than one public body the council will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. If the complaint is about a partner working on our behalf you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However the council, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, the council will look into this ourselves and respond to you. The council will inform you who the council have asked to look into your concern or complaint.

12. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Complaints Committee of the Council *or the* Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ (as appropriate).

13. The Clerk or the Complaints Committee of the Council or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint; the council will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that the council got it right. The council will also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files the council hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us

14. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within five working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the council will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days.) If your complaint is more complex, the council will:

14.1 let you know within this time why the council think it may take longer to investigate

14.2 tell you how long the council expect it to take.

14.3 let you know where the council have reached with the investigation, and

14.4 give you regular updates, including telling you whether any development might change our original estimate.

15. In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. The council do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined. The council believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, the council also consider that staff has the same rights. The council, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. The council will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence. The council has a separate policy to manage situations where the council find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

16. Not all complaints are justified or the council-founded. Sometimes Councils may find themselves being called upon to respond repeatedly to an individual or group of individuals where that Council has already investigated the matter under complaint (or something very similar) and has concluded that the complaint is without substance. In these cases, Raglan Community Council has a HABITUAL OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS POLICY to manage unreasonable complainants

17. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Complaints Committee of the Community Council or to the full Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ

18. Council contacts and links:

The Clerk
of *Raglan Community Council*
Address:
Ty-Nant,
Old Trap Road,
Gilwern
Monmouthshire,
NP7 0HW
Telephone: 01873 832 017
Email: raglanclerk@aol.com

The Chairman
of *Raglan Community Council*
Address:
Raglan,
Monmouthshire,
Telephone:
Email

If you are someone under the age of 18 and you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (phone 080880 23456, www.meiccymru.org) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

01792 765600 (South Wales) 01492
523333
post@childcomwales.org.uk
www.childcom.org.uk

South Wales Office:
Oystermouth House
Phoenix Way
Llansamlet
Swansea
SA7 9FS