

ROGIET COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

ROGIET COMMUNITY COUNCIL is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

When to use this policy

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. You might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known. Also, this policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In this case the Council has a separate policy procedure.

Have you asked us yet?

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time, (e.g. reporting a faulty street light, requesting an appointment etc) then this policy does not apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff cannot help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to express concern or complain formally

You can express your concern in either of the ways below:-

- You can e-mail us at rogietcc@btinternet.com
- You can write a letter to us at the following address

The Clerk, Rogiet
Community Council, 11 Cwrt Morgan, Caerwent, Caldicot,
Monmouthshire NP26 5QZ

Dealing with your complaint/concern

- We will formally acknowledge your complaint/concern within **5 working days**. and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you have a disability.
- We will deal with your complaint/concern in an open and honest way.
- We 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.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it is better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind. We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. (In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than two years ago.).

If you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint. If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf (for example repair or grounds maintenance contractors) you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the

Council to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious we may appoint an independent investigator. We will spell out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you do not want this to happen, it is important that you tell us. If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days however if your complaint is more complex, we will:

- ✓let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- ✓tell you how long we expect it to take.
- ✓let you know what point we have reached with the investigation,
- ✓give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are and in complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns and occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

We will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we will talk to Members of the Council and staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report.

We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened.

We will show how the mistake affected you.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Putting Things Right

If we did not provide a service you should have had, will aim to provide it now if that is possible. If we didn't do something well, will aim to put it right.

If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when you should have had one from us, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost.

Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- phone: 0845 601 0987
- e-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- in writing to:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Where any complaints/concerns have been received the Community Council considers a summary of all complaints quarterly as well as details of any serious complaints.

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

What if you need help

Community Councillors will aim to help you make your concerns known to the Council. If you need extra assistance, they will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact the Citizens Advice Bureau who may be able to assist you or seek advice from Monmouthshire County Council.

You can also use this concerns and complaints policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If 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)

post@childcomwales.org.uk www.childcom.org.uk

South Wales Office:

Oystermouth House Phoenix Way Llansamlet Swansea SA7 9FS

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, sometimes some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that staff and Community Councillors have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence. We have a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION WE NEED

A: Your details

Surname

Forename(s):

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:

Address and postcode:

Your e-mail address:

Daytime contact phone number

Mobile number:

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you.

Your requirements: if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally be the complainant. If you are making the complaint on behalf of someone else, please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: their details

Their name in full:

Address and postcode:

What is your relationship to them?

Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?

C: About your concern/complaint (Please ensure your answers to the following questions are as full and informative as possible.)

Nature of the service you are complaining about;

What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do;

Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected;

What do you think should be done to put things right?

When did you first become aware of the problem?

Have you already put your concern to any Member of the Council ? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so;

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 it would be

helpful to us if you could ensure they accompanied your complaint/concern;

Your signature and the date.

When you have completed your complaint/concern please send it to: The Clerk, Rogiet Community Council, 11 Cwrt Morgan, Caerwent, Caldicot, Monmouthshire NP26 5QZ

This policy was adopted by the Community Council at it's meeting held on 12th November 2012

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman, Rogiet Community Council

Informal Resolution



***Community Contact Clerk or
Rogiet Community Councillor***



**Response as soon as able
5 working days.**



*Place on agenda Next meeting
Details of issue(s) and how it/they were dealt with i.e. issue concluded or
Move to Formal Investigation.*



Provide overview of Formal Investigation Policy to Complainant

Formal Complaint/Concern



**Formally Acknowledge
5 working Days (include policy)**



***Concerns greater than 6 months will need/require an explanation as to
why it has taken so long to bring the complaint to the attention of the
full Council***



The whole Council will deal with formal complaints.



***RCC will aim to deal with formal complaints within 20 working days
and communicate any updates to full Council during this time***



Outcome

We will provide the complainant(s) with a full report of our findings



We will apologise if we get it wrong.



**If you are under 18 years if you need extra assistance we can
provide details of further assistance.**

Action Sheet of Complaints

Date received	Name	Complaint overview	Acknowledgement date	Date of 5 Working days	Date of 20 Working days	Outcome Closed/ Not Closed	Outcome Letter Sent	Remarks

Date October 2013

