



# Complaint Process & Form

## Making a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Parish Council's action, or lack of action, about the standard of a service delivered by the Council. Complaints should be sent by letter or email to the Parish Clerk (not individual Councillors) and marked 'Confidential – Formal Complaint'.

Complaints may be about councillors' actions relating to a council function such as:

- giving incorrect advice or information
- involvement in decision-making
- conduct, such as comments about a complainant on a social media site or behaviour in a council meeting, and
- a breach of the Code of Conduct, such as a failure to disclose a non-pecuniary interests

The complaint should include:

- Name & contact details of the complainant
- Date of the complaint
- Details of the complaint including when the breach/es in the Code of Conduct occurred, the Councillor/s involved and the nature of the breach

## How to complain:

### *Verbally:*

- Direct your complaint to the Parish Clerk either by a simple phone call or in person
- Verbal complaints are used to report minor matters or the need to repair a property owned or operated by the Council, such as lights being out etc.
- Verbal complaints are normally dealt with directly by the Parish Clerk without any need for response.
- You may make a verbal complaint to a Councillor, but under the legislation governing Parish Councils, a Councillor has no authority to act as an individual and the complaint must be referred back to the Parish Clerk.

### *Written:*

- To register a written complaint you will need to obtain and complete a copy of the Councils Complaint Form either via the Council website or directly from the Parish Clerk.
- Attach any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint and then return your completed documents to the Parish Clerk.
- Address your complaint to the Parish Clerk unless the complaint relates to the Clerk. In this instance the complaint should be addressed to the Parish Chairman and clearly marked "Council Chairman – Private and Confidential".

- Written complaints should be a matter of serious nature and once resolved will be recorded in the Councils minutes.
- Any complaints relating to issues concerning Human Resources or any other sensitive issues, may under legislation be exempt from publication.
- The Council will ask any complainants who submit letters or emails to the Council, to also submit their complaint via the Councils Complaint Form, to allow the Council to keep a consistent record of communication on complaints.

**Nature of the complaint:**

| <b>Nature of the complaint</b>  | <b>Who to complain to</b>   | <b>How to complain</b>   | <b>Who will deal with your complaint</b>  |
|---|---|--|---|
| A Complaint about the Council's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• processes</li> <li>• procedures</li> <li>• services</li> </ul> | Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. | Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support the complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing.   | The Clerk or Council. The Clerk may deal with and respond to the complaint or the matter may be debated by the council at a council meeting and if so the Clerk's response will be based on the decision of the council.  |
| A Complaint about the Conduct of an Employee of the council   | Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. | Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing. However, if the complaint is about the Clerk the complaint should be sent to the Council Chairman, sealed and marked Private & Confidential. | The complaint may be resolved or escalated and be treated as an internal disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the council's employee disciplinary procedure. In the event that the matter escalates the council will provide a copy of the disciplinary procedure on request. |
| A Complaint about Financial Irregularity  | Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. | Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing.  | The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer of the council should endeavour to provide an explanation. If you are not satisfied you can report the matter to the External Auditor.  |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>A Complaint about the Conduct of a Councillor</p> | <p>Contact the Clerk of the council first in an effort to resolve the matter locally. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.</p> <p>If this fails contact the Monitoring Officer at the District Council. The Monitoring Officer may provide you with a Complaint Form to register a formal complaint.</p> | <p>Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive written acknowledgement from the Clerk.</p> <p>Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive written acknowledgement from the Monitoring Officer.</p> | <p>The Monitoring Officer. Matters may be lengthy if an investigation is undertaken. The matter may be referred for consideration.</p> |
| <p>A Complaint about Criminal Activity</p>           | <p>Contact the police. They may ask you to complete forms or be interviewed.</p>  | <p>This is a civil matter so complete any forms and provide any relevant written evidence to support your concern.</p>   | <p>The police. Depending on severity, the matter may go to court.</p>  |

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt and inform the Chairman of the Council. Should the complaint involve the Chairman, it will be referred to the Vice Chairman.

Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

The matter will be timetabled as an agenda point at the next full meeting of the Parish Council. It will be duly considered and a course of action agreed. The course of action may be to revisit the complaint at the next meeting if more time is required to research the matter.

The aims of this complaint procedure is to ensure the process is:

- well documented and publicised
- easy to understand and use
- helpful and receptive, not adversarial
- objective and based on clear procedures
- capable of putting things right where necessary
- sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the complainant
- adequately resourced and fully supported by the elected parish councillors & officers
- regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for service improvement

If the complainant feels that their complaint has not been addressed or properly handled, it can be referred to the Monitoring Officer of the District or Borough Council. The monitoring officer can only deal with Code of Conduct complaints and will not address issues outside of their remit.



# Complaint Form

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Date   |  |
| Name   |  |
| Address  |  |
| Postcode   |  |
| Daytime phone number   |  |
| Evening Phone number   |  |
| Nature of Complaint - please give details of:  |  |
| 1. What you wish to complain about to the parish council?  |  |
| 2. When & where the situation took place including if possible details such as time, day, date & location? |  |
| 3. The names & if possible contact details of any others involved?   |  |
| 4. In your opinion, what action or decision would resolve the matter?                                      |  |

To register a complaint please complete & return this form with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint to the parish council.

Please continue your comments on a separate sheet if necessary.