

# WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Adopted by the Council on: 20/03/19

Minute Ref: 91/2018/d

## Introduction

Withington Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service from the Parish Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Parish Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

## Who to Complain too?

Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct and should be made to the Monitoring Officer, Shropshire Council, The Shirehall, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND

Complaints against the Clerk should be made to the Parish Council Chairman and these will be dealt with under the Parish Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints about the Parish Council, Committees or Decisions should be made to the Clerk or to the Parish Council Chairman if you would rather not report to the Clerk

## Informal Complaints

The Parish Council would rather resolve complaints informally. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk.

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 10 working days.

Should it not be possible to resolve a complaint informally the complainant may wish to escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.

There is no defined process for an informal complaint; but full records must be kept of any communications and attempts at resolution

## Formal Complaints

Formal complaints should be made in writing and should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days.

The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within 20 working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, the complainant you will be kept informed.)

If the Clerk is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution then the matter will be referred to a meeting of the Parish Council.

The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally at the meeting the complaint is considered at.

Should the complainant wish to submit any details, such as a summary of the complaint, this must be received 7 clear working days before the Council meeting. The Council will provide the same to the complainant.

The council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.

As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 working days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

A vexatious complainant is one who persists unreasonably with their complaints, or makes complaints in order to inconvenience the Parish Council rather than genuinely resolve an issue. This may include making serial complaints about different issues or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly.

If such complaints affect the Parish Council's ability to undertake its work and provide its services to others, it may alter the way it deals with complaints by not acknowledging or responding to vexatious complaints. Complaints will still be read in case they contain new information.

If a complainant is to be classified as vexatious, they shall be informed so and given a timescale of how long this will remain the case.

Should a vexatious complainant make a new complaint about new issues these will be treated on their merits