

Slapton Parish Council



The Slapton Parish Council Manual

Complaints Procedure

August 7, 2017

Parish Council complaints procedure

The object of any complaint procedure is to

- Put things right when they go wrong
- Ensure that mistakes do not recur in the future

What constitutes 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 or
- About the standard of service delivered by the council.
 - The complaint may relate to an action taken or a service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.
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What is a complaints procedure?

The way the council manages any report of a problem with the service you are getting or trying to get from the council, or a problem with things that the council does nor doesn't do, is via a complaints procedure.

What can be expected?

The aims of a complaints procedure are to ensure the process is:

- Well documented and publicized,
- 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 councilors and officers
- Regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for service improvement

How to complain

Verbal complaint –

- These should be to the Clerk of the council and can be either as a simple phone call or in person.
- This type of complaint would be to report some minor matter or need for repair to property owned or operated by the council such as failed streetlight.
- A verbal complaint will normally be dealt with directly by the Clerk without any need for a response.
- You may make a complaint to a councilor but under the legislation governing parish councils a councilor has not authority to act as an individual and must refer the matter to the Clerk.

Written Complaint –

- To register a written complaint please obtain and complete a copy of the council's complaint form with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint and then return it to the council's address.

- This should be addressed to the Clerk unless the complaint concerns the Clerk.
- In this instance the complaint should be sealed and addressed to the Chairman of the Council and clearly marked, "Council Chairman – Private and Confidential."
- Written complaints would be for matters of a serious nature and once resolved will be recorded in the councils minutes
- However certain types of Human Resource or other sensitive issues may under certain parts of legislation be exempt from publication.
- You may also send a letter, fax or email of complaint to your council but the council may ask you to complete their complaints form as this allows the council to keep a consistent record of communications of complaints.

Nature of complaint

- Before making a complaint it is important to contact the council to ensure the council is the Responsible Body to handle the complaint.
- It is also important to clearly identify and document the details of the complaint
- The way in which a complaint is handled is dependent of the nature of the complaint and different types of complaint will be handled in different ways.

The following table summarizes how different types of written complain may be handled by the council.

Nature of the complaint	How to complain	Who to complain to	Who will deal with your complaint
<p>Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Processes - Procedures - Services 	<p>The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint.</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>	<p>You will receive a written acknowledgement of receipt from the Clerk. written reply from the Clerk.</p> <p>Where appropriate, such as a question relating to process, the Clerk will forward a single written reply to the complainant covering both acknowledgement and the answer.</p> <p>The matter may have been debated by the council at a council meeting and if so the Clerks response will be based on the decision of the council.</p>
<p>Financial Irregularity</p>	<p>The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint.</p>	<p>The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer of the council</p>	<p>The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer of the council should endeavor to provide an explanation.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied you can report the</p>

			matter to the External Auditor.
Conduct of an employee	The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint.	The Clerk, unless the complaint is about the Clerk. If this is the case the complaint should be sent to the Chairman, it should be sealed and marked "private and confidential"	The complaint may be resolved or escalated and be treated as in internal disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the councils employee disciplinary procedure. In the event that the matter escalates the council will provide a copy of the disciplinary procedure on request.
Criminal Activity	In writing, including any relevant evidence to support your concern.	The Police	The police. Depending on severity, the matter may go to court.
Conduct of a Councilor	This type of complaint depends upon whose code of conduct the council has adopted.	If the council has adopted the principal authorities code of conduct, The Monitoring Officer at the District Council or Unitary Authority should be contacted in writing. For all other cases the council clerk is the monitoring officer and council must have its own investigatory procedures in place.	