

OWSLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

adopted by Council 9th June 2014

Objective

The Council objective is to fulfill its statutory objectives in an efficient, cost effective and civil manner, and to seek to influence other statutory bodies and agencies for the benefit of parishioners in relation to those services which fall outside the Council's statutory remit. On occasion parishioners may feel the Council has not met these goals and the objective of the complaints policy is to put things right when they go wrong, and to 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 a 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.

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. A verbal complaint will normally be dealt with directly by the Clerk without any need for a response. A written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the Clerk's response, you should put you complain in writing – please refer to the paragraph below. You may make a complaint to the Chairman or any other Councillor but under the legislation governing parish councils a Councillor has no authority to act as an individual and must refer the matter to the Clerk.
- **Written complaint** – to register a written complaint please obtain & complete a copy of the Parish Council's **complaint form** with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint. 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 will be reported to the Parish Council even if they are resolved before the Council meets. The Clerk or the Chairman, as relevant, will bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council and will notify you of the date on which your complaint will be considered.

If the complaint concerns the Clerk, the Council may decide to instigate disciplinary proceeding in accordance with the contractual arrangements with the Clerk and the outcome of those proceedings will be reported to the Parish Council.

The Council's final decision on a complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public and will be recorded in the Council's minutes. However certain types of Human Resource or other sensitive issues may under certain parts of legislation be exempt from publication.

Nature of a complaint

Before making a complaint it is important to contact the Clerk to ensure Owslebury Parish Council is the responsible body to handle the complaint.

The way in which a complaint is handled is dependent on the nature of the complaint; different types of complaint will be handled in different ways.

The following table summarises how different types of written complaint 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"> <input type="checkbox"/> processes <input type="checkbox"/> procedures <input type="checkbox"/> services 	<p>The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.</p> <p>Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint.</p>	<p>The Clerk.</p>	<p>You will receive a written reply from the Clerk.</p> <p>The matter will be reported to the Council and may have been debated by the council at a Council meeting and if so the Clerk's response will be based on the decision of the Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Financial irregularity 	<p>The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.</p> <p>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 matter will be reported to the Council and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer Council will endeavour to provide an explanation.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied you can report the matter to the External Auditor.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct of the Clerk 	<p>In writing sent to the Chairman, it should be sealed and marked "private & confidential"</p>	<p>Chairman</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>In the event that the matter escalates the Council will provide a copy of the disciplinary procedure on request.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal activity 	<p>In writing, including any relevant evidence to support your concern.</p>	<p>The police.</p>	<p>The police.</p> <p>Depending on severity, the matter may go to court.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct of a Councillor 	<p>This type of complaint needs to be referred in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Winchester City Council, as Owslebury Parish Council has no power to investigate the conduct of one of its own elected Members.</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer at Winchester City Council.</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Matters may be lengthy if an investigation is undertaken.</p> <p>The matter may be referred for consideration by the Local Standards Committee.</p>

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Complaint Form

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: Michael Cleary

Address: Yew Tree House, Hensting Lane, Owslebury, Winchester SO21 1LE

Email: owsleburyparishcouncil@gmail.com

Date	
Your 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 Clerk at the above address.

Please continue your comments on a separate sheet if necessary.