



WRITTLE PARISH COUNCIL
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COMPLAINTS POLICY

Version Number	Date	Author	Notes
1.0		L Fox, Clerk	Approved at APCM, 5 May 2021
1.1	16.05.22	L Fox, Clerk	Approved at APCM, 16 May 2022
1.2	27.04.23	L Fox, Clerk	Approved at APCM, 15 May 2023
1.3	15.05.24	S Vainola	Approved at APCM, 13 May 2024
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1.5	05.05.26	L Fox, Clerk	Approved at APCM, 11 May 2026

Date of next review May 2027.

Writtle Parish Council provides many services to the community. We try to get our service delivery right every time, but there are occasions when users of our services may be dissatisfied with our performance, for any number of reasons.

This policy sets out how to raise a complaint with the parish council.

Informal Complaint

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. Informal complaints can be made by telephone, email or in writing to the parish council. The complaint will be handled by the most appropriate member of staff, depending on the nature of the complaint.

The Clerk will be kept informed of the handling of the complaint and its resolution. Complaints should always be directed through the Parish Clerk, not through individual Councillors.

A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not in a position to resolve complaints. It is expected that most complaints can be resolved through this informal route. However, the Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach had not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is so serious, then the formal complaints process should be followed.

Formal Complaint

The Clerk to the Council is responsible for managing the formal complaints process. The Clerk is the senior officer of the Council.

If a formal complaint is being raised against the Clerk, then the process as detailed should be followed, but the Chairman of the Council should be informed instead of the Clerk. A formal complaint can only be submitted in writing to the Parish Council (via The Clerks address), it should be addressed to the Clerk, marked "Confidential – Formal Complaint", this will ensure the matter is handled by the Clerk's nominated deputy, should the Clerk be away.

The Council encourages contact by email and telephone, but as a formal complaint is a serious matter will only accept these in writing. The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation. It is not an appropriate procedure for a complaint against individual councillors, these should be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford City Council.

Procedure

1. The complainant shall be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other Proper Officer, they shall be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the Committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.

8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, Clerk or other Proper Officer to explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Clerk or other Proper Officer.
13. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
15. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. The decision shall be confirmed in writing, within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.