

Huish Champflower Complaints Policy

Complaints against Parish Councillors

Complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the West Somerset Council Standards Committee. Complainants should be advised to contact the appropriate body directly or the Clerk for further information.

Complaints about the administration/ procedures of the Parish Council

This code of practice is therefore aimed at situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or about its procedures and which cannot be satisfactorily resolved with less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the clerk or proper officer. It is not an appropriate forum for a complaint against individuals, as the provisions available above should cover these situations.

Complaints against the Parish Clerk or staff

Complaints about an employee of the Council (i.e. the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally as such and appropriate action taken as required. Complaints must be made in writing to the Clerk, or in the case of the complaint being against the Clerk, the Chairman.

Code of Practice

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk, clearly stating the nature of the complaint and the remedy sought.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the Council will consider the matter.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting of the council and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven (7) 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. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.