



ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

This Code of Practice is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or its procedures. Complaints about the Clerk should be dealt with as an employment matter and resolved in accordance with the relevant employment policies.

When a complaint is made against a local council, member(s) of the Council or staff are likely to be mentioned, or complained about. However, a complaint against a council should be treated as a complaint against the body corporate of the council, not as a complaint against individual employees or member(s) of the Council.

The Parish Council does not consider formal complaints against councillors. These are dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's adopted Code of Conduct by Stafford Borough Council's Monitoring Officer.

Should the complaint be in regard to the Parish Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair.

All other complaints should be submitted to the Parish Clerk and will be dealt with promptly to maintain public confidence.

The contact details are: Mrs. S. Worden, 16 Newport Road Great Bridgeford, Stafford ST18 9PR. Email: clerk@eccleshallparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter would be considered by the Council.

A fair and courteous response will be given in all cases, and a full and proper investigation may be undertaken to establish all the facts.

Informal Complaints

The Parish Council will seek to resolve all complaints informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.

An informal complaint is made to the Parish Clerk who will liaise with the complainant and relevant members to seek resolution.

If it is not possible to resolve a complaint informally the complainant may escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.

Should, in the opinion of the Parish Clerk or Chair, the complaint be of a serious nature, the complaint shall be escalated 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

Where possible, the Parish Council would wish to solve any complaint informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.

Formal Complaints about Councillors

The Parish Council does not consider formal complaints about its members.

Members are required to comply with an adopted Code of Conduct.

A formal complaint about a member should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer of Stafford Borough Council who will arrange the investigation of the complaint. Stafford Borough Council has its own policies for dealing with such complaints.

The contact details for the Monitoring Officer are:

Monitoring Officer
Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford ST16 3AQ

Tel: 01785 619220

Email: monitoringofficer@staffordbc.gov.uk

Formal Complaints about the Clerk

Formal complaints about the Parish Clerk must be made in writing to the Chairman; setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.

Complaints will be processed in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Formal Complaints about the Council, Committees or Decisions

Complaints about a decision, the general operations of the Council or the Council as a body should be made to the Parish Clerk in writing, providing any additional information that will enable the complaint to be investigated.

The complaint shall first be considered by the Parish Clerk and Chair who shall seek to resolve the issue or explain the background to the decision

Should it not be possible to resolve the complaint, it shall be referred to Full Council. The complainant shall be invited to address the Council to outline the background to the complaint.

The complainant shall provide copies of documentation or other evidence 7 days prior to the meeting, similarly, the Council shall provide copies of any relevant documentation to the claimant.

The complainant should be asked to outline the complaint and members be allowed to ask questions of both the complainant and the Clerk.

The complainant and the Clerk (if necessary) should be asked to leave the room and return to hear the decision.

The decision of the Parish Council, together with details of any impending action to be confirmed in writing to the complainant within 7 working days.

In order to manage any confidentiality issues, the Council will normally deal with your complaint in private session and your details will not therefore be released publicly.

Records shall be kept detailing all complaints, actions undertaken and the outcome.

Vexatious Complaints

A vexatious complainant is one who persists unreasonably with their complaints, or makes complaints in order to inconvenience the 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.

Please refer to the separate Vexatious Complaints policy for more information.

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