

GREAT ALNE PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, (or relevant Committee if any), as appropriate, for consideration.
2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council.
3. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.
4. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council at 2 Flax Close, Alcester B49 5DQ or by email to greatalne.parishcouncil@googlemail.com. The complaint will be dealt with within 21 days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.
5. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example,) he or she should be advised to write to the Chair.
6. The complainant should be asked at the outset whether the complaint should be treated as confidential.
7. (a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) or Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

(b) Where the Clerk to the Council or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Council. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

8. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.
9. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.
10. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

Before the Meeting

11. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

12. 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.
13. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
14. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), members.
15. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.

16. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
17. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
18. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

19. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.