

WINTERBORNE ST MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

THE POLICY

Winterborne St Martin Parish Council (the Council) recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council or one of its members or employees. To address these issues the Council has adopted a procedure for the handling of complaints. This procedure allows people to have a form of address to the Council if they feel they have a complaint, or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the Council staff, Councillors, the Council or its Committees.

VERBAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

1. On receipt of a complaint by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail the Clerk in the first instance, or other nominated person, will try to satisfy the complainant immediately or as soon as is practicable.
2. If the Clerk is unable to answer the complaint immediately, then full details of the complaint together with the complainant's telephone number etc. will be recorded so that a further verbal response can be made as soon as possible.
3. If a verbal response is unable to satisfy, then the Clerk will ask that the complaint be put in writing in order that it can be investigated more fully.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL

1. On receiving a written complaint, the Clerk shall try to settle the complaint directly.
2. If necessary, the Clerk or Chairman will send a holding letter to the complainant to allow further time to address the issues raised.
3. The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date of the meeting. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the nature of the complaint to the meeting.
4. The Clerk shall consult with the Chairman/Vice Chairman to consider whether the written complaint warrants discussion at a Council meeting in the absence of the press and public, with the decision on the complaint announced at the Council meeting in public.
5. The Clerk will communicate in writing the decision that has been made by the Council and the nature of any action taken by the Council.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE OF THE COUNCIL

1. Any complaint against the Clerk or other employee of the Council should be submitted in writing to the current Chairman of the Council.
2. If the complaint is made against the actions of an employee, it will be considered as an employment issue and the Chairman or Clerk will present the complaint to the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
3. If the complaint is made against the actions of the Clerk, it will be considered as an employment issue and the Chairman will present the complaint to the Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press or public.
4. The complainant may be invited to attend part of the meeting to explain the nature of their complaint, in the absence of the public and press.
5. Persons mentioned in the complaint will have the opportunity to explain the nature of their actions the meeting, in the absence of the public and press.
6. The result of any Council consideration of a complaint will be announced at a Council meeting in public.

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COMPLAINTS AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

Parish Councillors sign up to a Code of Conduct on taking office. The Council is unable to investigate complaints against any of its members. If you wish to submit a complaint for breach of this code should do so to the Monitoring Officer at

The Monitoring Officer
West Dorset District Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1UZ

Tel number: 01305 252253

Further information can be accessed from <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/>

Also refer to the West Dorset District Council 'How to Make A Complaint' booklet for what matters can be dealt with under this procedure.