

SHREWLEY PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
(revised January 2019)

Shrewley Parish Council is committed to providing an open and transparent quality service to local residents. Should you be dissatisfied by the Parish Council's service or actions the Parish Council would in the first instance aim to resolve your concerns informally. However, if this is not possible you may lodge a complaint using the following procedure.

For the purposes of this procedure Shrewley Parish Council defines a complaint as:

'A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, regardless of whether the action was taken, or the service was provided, by the council itself or by a person or body acting on behalf of the council.'

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 or other nominated officer stating:
 - his or her contact details;
 - the nature of the complaint in detail;
 - the subject of the complaint (e.g member, clerk);
 - the remedy sought
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other nominated officer, he or she should be advised to address it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The council will not disclose the identity of the complainant unless he or she consents or the disclosure is fair and lawful under GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). The Agenda and Minutes will not contain personal, financial or confidential information that relates to the individual or third party. The complainant should be advised as to whether the complaint will be treated confidentially.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if 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 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

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. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. 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.

9. 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.
10. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
11. 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.
12. 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

13. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
14. From receipt of the complaint to resolution should take no longer than 12 weeks. Lengthier and more complex complaints may require reasonable flexibility in the period of time to investigate.

Consider engaging other procedures/bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

- i) Alleged financial irregularity: Refer to Local electors have a statutory right to object Council's audit of account (s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998).
- ii) Alleged criminal activity: Refer to the Police
- iii) Member conduct: A complaint relating to a member's alleged failure to comply with the Shrewley Parish Council Code of Conduct should be dealt with by WDC.
- iv) Employee conduct: Refer to internal disciplinary procedure.