

ALDERHOLT PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

Alderholt Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

PLEASE NOTE: All information will be kept confidential, particularly names and addresses which could identify a complainant, site or complaint. All complaints will be recorded and include: -

Full name and address

Details of the complaint including relevant dates

Action taken

Who does this apply to?

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns. It does not deal with complaints against individual Councillors (see end of document)

More specifically a complaint is where: -

- The Council has not done something it has a duty to do or normally does
- The Council has done something it has no right to do or does not normally do as a matter of established practice
- The conduct or behaviour of a member of staff is unsatisfactory
- A person does not understand or is not informed of why or how a situation arose or exists
- An adopted and known procedure is not followed
- Maladministration is alleged.

How do I make my views known?

You may not have a complaint but still want to express a view on Council business. The appropriate time for commenting on Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you disagree with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

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Procedure

You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

The Chairman of the Council will be informed of the complaint and the action being taken and will keep the matter under review.

If the complaint involves the Clerk, an approach should be made directly to the Chairman of the Parish Council who will follow the same procedure.

The Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council will notify you within 20 working days of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Finance Committee of the Parish Council or the Staffing Committee, if it is a complaint regarding a member of staff and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

Contacts

The Clerk of Alderholt Parish Council

Mrs Nicky Ashton

Parish Office, 1 Station Road, Alderholt, Hants, SP6 3RB

Tel; 01425 657587

clerk@alderholtparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Chairman of Alderholt Parish Council

Cllr Adrian Hibberd

Lower Bull Farm, Fordingbridge, Hants, SP6 3EF

Tel; 01425 652049

CouncillorAHibberd@alderholtparishcouncil.gov.uk

This Complaints Procedure DOES NOT apply to complaints against Councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 23rd August 2021.

By law, all Councillors and co-opted Councillors are required to follow a Code of Conduct when acting in their capacity as a Councillor. A Code of Conduct has been

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adopted by the Parish Council which can be found on our website or upon request to the Council Office. The Code allows the Council to fulfill its obligations under section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and is consistent with the principles of public life as set out in the Act.

Dorset Council is the authority which deals with complaints against Councillors and has adopted procedures for dealing with those complaints. If a member of the public feels a Councillor has broken any of the rules of the Code of Conduct, they can complain to the Monitoring Officer at Dorset Council who will investigate the allegation that Councillors behaviour may have fallen short of the required standards.

The Monitoring Officer's contact details are:

Jonathan Mair
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
jonathan.mair1@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel; 01305 224181

Broadly, the Code requires Councillors: -

- to behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful
- to not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory
- to not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person
- To use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
- To not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law
- If they have a personal interest in a matter than comes before the Council, to declare the fact and, if appropriate, not take part in the decision-making process
- To register financial and other interests (a copy of the register is available for public inspection

Date	Min	Action
13/06/11	PC 107/11	Adopted
14/05/12	PC 79/12	Reviewed – no change
23/02/15	P&F 07/15	Reviewed and amended complaints procedure
09/03/18		Amended re P & F changes, Chairman details and EDDC address
14/05/18	PC 56/18	Check Chairman's details
13/05/19	PC 59/19	Check Chairman's Details and Monitoring Officer
11/10/21	PC 124/21	Reviewed and change of date for adoption of new Code of Conduct