

Shillingford St George Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Before Processing a Complaint

1. All formal complaints against the parish council must be communicated in writing. And include a contact address or email and preferred method of contact.
2. The complainant must confirm whether he/she wishes the complaint to be treated confidentially. It is unlikely the complainant will waive confidentiality. Even if he/she does so the parish council must comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
3. The parish council complaint procedure will be published on the parish website and will be accessible by any member of the public.
4. The complaint should be sent to the parish clerk either by email to shillingfordpc@gmail.com or by post to the parish clerk. Contact details will be available on the parish website.
5. Should the complaint relate to the parish clerk, it should be sent to the parish council chair.
6. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days, outlining who will be dealing with the complaint and a timeframe.
7. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the parish council will endeavour to resolve complaints within 21 working days.
8. Should a complainant wish to appeal against a decision, this should be made in writing to the parish clerk within 14 days of receiving the decision notification.

Receipt of the Complaint

9. The Clerk or Chair shall:
 - Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days
 - Confirm to the complainant whether the complaint will be dealt with as a confidential matter
 - Confirm the next steps
 - Outline an expected timeframe for the investigation

Investigating the Complaint

10. The parish council will investigate the facts of the complaint and collate relevant evidence.
11. Should the complainant request an opportunity to make verbal representation, they will be invited to meet with the parish council or representatives.
12. Before the meeting and within 7 days of the meeting, the complainant should provide the parish clerk / chair of any additional or new information or evidence relevant to the complaint.
13. Should a meeting be agreed, the complainant may be accompanied by a friend.

Meeting with the Complainant

14. The parish clerk/chair will explain how the meeting will proceed.
15. The complainant should outline the grounds for the complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by the parish clerk/chair and members of the parish council.

16. The parish clerk or nominated councillor will have the opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant.
17. The parish clerk or nominated councillor and the complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their respective positions.
18. The complainant will be advised when a decision about the complaint will be made and when it will be communicated to them.

After the Complaint has been Decided Upon

19. Within the agreed timeframe for resolution the parish council will write to the complainant to confirm whether or not the complaint has been upheld. The parish council will give reasons for their decision together with details of any action it is taking (if appropriate) along with information on how to appeal.
20. Should an appeal be made, an independent person will be appointed to lead the process.