

Witley & Milford Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Adopted on 26th May 2022

To Review on 18^h May 2023

Witley & Milford Parish Council ('the 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.

The appropriate time for influencing 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 or committee meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise the 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.

If you have a complaint about the Council we would like to hear from you. The Local Government Ombudsman offers the following definition of a complaint:

'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, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.'

This information sheet tells you how to complain, and what happens to your complaint on receipt. It also tells you who deals with the complaint, how you can be represented, when a decision is made and how you will be notified of this.

Feedback from our residents, those who work here and visit, whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again; and
- to encourage good practice

How to contact us with your complaint

You can contact the Council by telephone, in writing, by email or by visiting the Council's offices. A form is included with this information sheet which you can fill in and send back to us. You will find a list of useful contact details on the back page of this sheet.

What we will do when we hear from you

We will deal with any comment about the Council as quickly as possible. We will investigate the complaint fully. We may be able to give you an answer straight away, or we may need more time to investigate what you have told us. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer. Your complaint will in

the first instance be investigated by the Clerk of the Council, or the Council Chair if the complaint relates to the Clerk. If you remain dissatisfied then your complaint will be dealt with by the Full Council or Committee of the Council whichever is appropriate. If you have a complaint, we hope we will be able to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure that there will be no recurrence.

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. Below are examples of complaints which will require special consideration and where we may engage other procedures or bodies. If this is the case then we will advise you of this.

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s. 16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Council may need to consult our auditor or another relevant body.
Criminal activity	The police
Members' conduct	If the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Local Government Conduct the complaint will dealt with in line with the Code's procedures.
Employee conduct	The Council's disciplinary procedure

Confidentiality

We will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand (e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned). Details will only be given to those members of staff directly concerned.

How to contact us

By phone: 01483 422044

By email: clerk@witley-pc.gov.uk

By post: Council Office, Milford Village Hall, Portsmouth Road, Milford, Surrey, GU8 5DS

Witley & Milford Parish Council's website: www.witley-pc.gov.uk