



Wheatley Parish Council's Complaints Policy

Approved: (07.02.2022), reviewed 13.05.2024.

1. Introduction

Wheatley Parish Council (WPC) 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. WPC acknowledges that despite its best efforts, there may be times when residents or visitors become dissatisfied with the standard of service they have received from the council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by WPC.

2. Scope of document

This document will detail how WPC will handle complaints made to or against the council, its administration, processes, procedures and may include complaints following the actions or inaction of employees, and volunteers.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 15th May 2023 and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of South Oxfordshire District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of South Oxfordshire District Council.

3. Raising a concern, issue, or question

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. This can be done by contacting the Council in advance of a meeting at which items are to be discussed. Alternatively, full council meetings provide a public participation session, where residents can raise issues, although decisions may not be made at the time.

4. Complaints regarding council decisions

If you are unhappy 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.#

5. Handling of complaints

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/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 Clerk will submit a summary of the issues to the Council together with the attempts made to resolve the complaint. In such circumstances the Council may decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant and will inform the complainant, accordingly, explaining that only new or substantive issues will merit a response.

Anonymous complaints will be handled in line with the Council's Communication Policy

If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the relevant Committee of the Council, or to the Council (as appropriate).

The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you or others.

The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and 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 Complaints Committee of the Parish / Community Council or to the full Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

6. Persistent/vexatious complaints

There may be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when there is no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts of some other recognised procedure should or has been taken. This will be treated as an unreasonable or vexatious complaint.

7. Contact details

Clerk (Michelle Legg)	Chairman (Cllr Alison Sercombe)
The Parish Office, 89a High St, Wheatley, OX33 1XP 01865 875615 clerk@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	27 Elton Crescent, Wheatley, OX33 1UZ 01865 873422 alisonsercombe@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

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