

Stockton Heath Parish Council

Complaints Policy

This policy is supplemental to, and does not in any way override, the Parish Council standing orders and/or Financial Regulations.

This policy was adopted by the full parish council at its meeting on 14 May 2019.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stockton Heath Parish Council is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman and has adopted this policy to give clarity to the public to ensure complaints are properly and fully considered.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that it is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman but has adopted this Code to ensure that complainants are properly and fully considered.
- 1.3 The Council does not consider formal complaints against councillors. These are dealt with in accordance with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct by Warrington Borough Council's Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4 All other complaints should be addressed to the Clerk and will be dealt with promptly to maintain public confidence. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.
- 1.5 Should the complaint be in regard to the Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Parish Council.
- 1.6 A fair and courteous response will be given in all cases, and a full and proper investigation may be undertaken to establish all the pertinent facts.

2. Informal Complaint

- 2.1 The Council will seek to resolve all complaints informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.
- 2.2 An informal complaint is made to the Clerk who will liaise with the complainant and relevant members/officers to seek resolution.
- 2.3 Should it not be possible to resolve a complaint informally the complainant may escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.
- 2.4 Should, in the opinion of the Clerk or Chair, the complaint be of a serious nature, the complaint shall be escalated to a formal complaint.

- 2.5 There is no defined process for an informal complaint; but full records must be kept of any communications and attempts at resolution.

3. Formal Complaints

Where possible, the Parish Council would wish to solve any complaint informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.

Formal Complaints about Councillors

- 3.1 The Council does not consider formal complaints about its members.
- 3.2 Members are required to comply with an adopted Code of Conduct.
- 3.3 A formal complaint about a member should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer of Warrington Borough Council who will arrange the investigation of the complaint. Warrington Borough Council has its own policies for dealing with such complaints.
- 3.4 The contact details for the Monitoring Officer are:
The Monitoring Officer
Warrington Borough Council
Standards Committee
West Annex
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH
monitoringofficer@warrington.gov.uk

4. Formal Complaints about Officers/Employees

- 4.1 Formal complaints about an employee of the Parish Council must be made in writing to the Clerk; setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.
- 4.2 Complaints will be referred to the appropriate person and be processed in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary procedure.
- 4.3 Complaints about the Clerk must be made in writing to the Chair, setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.

5. Formal Complaints about The Council, Committees Or Decisions

- 5.1 Complaints about a decision, the general operations of the Council or the Council as a body should be made to the Clerk in writing, providing any additional information that will enable the complaint to be investigated.
- 5.2 The complaint shall first be considered by the Clerk, Chair of the Parish Council and Chairman of the relevant committee who shall seek to resolve the issue or explain the background to the decision.

- 5.3 Should it not be possible to resolve the complaint, it shall be referred to the relevant committee for consideration or, at the discretion of the Chair, be referred to Full Council.

The complainant shall be invited to address the committee/Council to outline the background to the complaint.

- 5.4 Records shall be kept detailing all complaints, actions undertaken and the outcome.

- 5.5 Complaints will be acknowledge in writing within five working days of receipt. You will be notified 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 timescale may need to be extended to allow a full investigation. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

6. Vexatious Complaints

- 6.1 A vexatious complainant is one who persists unreasonably with their complaints, or makes complaints in order to inconvenience the Council rather than genuinely resolve an issue. This may include making serial complaints about different issues or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly.

- 6.2 If such complaints affect the Council's ability to undertake its work and provide its services to others, it may alter the way it deals with complaints by not acknowledging or responding to vexatious complaints. Complaints will still be read in case they contain new information.

- 6.3 If a complainant is to be classified as vexatious they shall be informed so and given a timescale of how long this will remain the case.

- 6.4 Should a vexatious complainant make a new complaint about new issues these will be treated on their merits.

Contacts

The Clerk to Stockton Heath Parish Council

Address: The Sandy Lane Centre
Sandy Lane, Stockton Heath
Warrington WA4 2AY

Telephone: 01925 210558

Email: clerk@stocktonheathpc.org.uk

The Chairman of Stockton Heath Parish Council

For current Chairman's details see Parish Council notice boards and website:

<http://www.stocktonheathpc.org.uk>