

# **Teffont Parish Council Complaint Procedure**

## **Principle**

1. Teffont Parish Council's complaint procedure is based upon the principles of Fairness, Openness and Accountability.

## **Basis for Complaint**

2. There are two broad grounds upon which a member of the public may make a complaint to or about Teffont Parish Council under this procedure.
  - a. Complaints to Teffont Parish Council about an individual councillor's conduct in the course of his or her duties as a councillor.
  - b. Complaints about the Parish Council's conduct in the course of exercising its functions as an elected body.

## **Complaints about Individual Councillors**

3. Any complaint about any individual councillor's conduct must be made in writing and reference any alleged breach of the Parish Council's **Code of Conduct**. No other complaint about an individual councillor will be entertained by the Parish Council.
4. In the event that a member of the public has a complaint about any councillor then they are to:
  - a. Write to the Clerk setting out:
    - i. The basis for their complaint by reference to any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.
    - ii. The detail of their complaint.
    - iii. Any evidence that supports their complaint.
    - iv. Any redress that they seek.
5. The Chairman may initiate an internal review of the matter drawing upon at least two councillors (one of which may be the Chairman) in order to investigate the matter. The investigating councillors shall form a sub-committee of the Parish Council and may seek further evidence or clarification from the complainant and from the subject of the complaint. They shall report their findings to the Chairman.
6. At the conclusion of the review the Clerk shall notify both the complainant and the subject of the complaint of any conclusions together with any redress.
7. If the complainant is satisfied with the conclusions and/or with any redress then they shall notify the Clerk in writing and the complaint shall then be closed.
8. If the complainant has not responded within a reasonable timeframe (14 days) to notification of the conclusions and/or of any offered redress then the Chairman shall determine that the complaint is closed.
9. A complaint that has been closed shall not be re-opened save with the consent of the Chairman.
10. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the result of this review or with any redress offered then the matter may be taken further in accordance with the following section of this Procedure (Complaints about the Parish Council).

11. In the event that the subject of the complaint is the Chairman then his duties in reviewing the complaint shall be carried out by the Vice Chairman.
12. In the event that the subject of the complaint is the Clerk then the complainant shall lodge the complaint in the usual way with the Clerk but shall request leave to communicate directly with the Chairman on any matters related to the complaint. Such a request shall not be unreasonably refused.

### **Complaints about the Parish Council**

13. Complaints about the Parish Council's conduct shall be made in writing by reference to its **Standing Orders**.
14. In the event of complaints about specific areas such as Data Protection or Freedom of Information then such complaints may be made directly to the ICO <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
15. In the event that a member of the public has a complaint about the Parish Council in relation to any alleged breach of its Standing Orders then they are to:
  - a. Write to the Clerk setting out:
    - i. The basis for their complaint by reference to the Standing Orders.
    - ii. The detail of their complaint.
    - iii. Any evidence that supports their complaint.
    - iv. Any redress that they seek.
16. The Chairman may initiate an internal review of the matter drawing upon at least two councillors (one of which may be the Chairman) in order to investigate the matter. The investigating councillors shall form a sub-committee of the Parish Council and may seek further evidence or clarification from the complainant. They shall report their findings to the Chairman and thence to the Parish Council.
17. At the conclusion of the review the Clerk shall notify the complainant of any conclusions together with any redress.
18. If the complainant is satisfied with the conclusions and/or with any redress then they shall notify the Clerk in writing and the complaint shall then be closed.
19. If the complainant has not responded within a reasonable timeframe (14 days) to notification of the conclusions and/or of any offered redress, then the Chairman shall determine that the complaint is closed.
20. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the conclusions reached or the redress offered then they should take their complaint to Wiltshire Council [complaints@wiltshire.cov.uk](mailto:complaints@wiltshire.cov.uk)

### **Fairness, Openness and Accountability**

21. Teffont Parish Council is committed to the principles of fairness, openness and accountability in addressing any complaints made by the public. Since such principles apply both ways, it will not be drawn into mischievous or vexatious complaints and it reserves the right not to have its or its officers' time wasted by such complaints.
22. In the event that the Parish Council has declined to examine or take action on a complaint on the basis that it considers it to be mischievous or vexatious, or in the event that a complainant believes that their complaint is wrongly regarded as

mischievous or vexatious, then the complainant should raise their complaint directly to Wiltshire Council in accordance with the relevant section of this Procedure set out above.

23. Nothing in these Complaint Procedures limits the rights of any person to raise any complaint with any other authority or public body.