

HOW TO COMPLAIN TO YOUR PARISH OR TOWN COUNCIL

(subject to approval by Councillors at the next meeting)

Objective

The object of any complaint's procedure is to put things right when they go wrong and ensure that mistakes do not recur in the future.

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the parish council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service delivered by the council. The complaint may relate to an action taken or a service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.

What is a complaints procedure?

The way the council manages any report of a problem with the service you are getting or trying to get from the council, or a problem with things that the council does or doesn't do, is via a complaint's procedure.

What can be expected?

The aims of a complaint's procedure are to ensure the process is:

- well documented and publicised
- easy to understand and use
- helpful and receptive, not adversarial
- objective and based on clear procedures
- capable of putting things right where necessary
- sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the complainant
- adequately resourced and fully supported by the elected parish councillors & officers
- regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for service improvement

How to complain

- **Verbal complaint** – these should be to the Clerk of the council and can be either as a simple phone call or in person. This type of complaint would be to report some minor matter or need for repair to property owned or operated by the council such as a failed streetlight. A verbal complaint will normally be dealt with directly by the Clerk without any need for a response. You may make a complaint to a councillor but under the legislation governing parish councils a councillor has no authority to act as an individual and must refer the matter to the Clerk.
- **Written complaint** – to register a written complaint please obtain & complete a copy of the council's complaint form (available below) with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint & then return it to the council's address. This should be addressed to the Clerk unless the complaint concerns the Clerk. In this instance the complaint should be sealed and addressed to the Chairman of the council and clearly marked "Council Chairman – Private and Confidential". Written complaints would be for matters of a serious nature and once resolved will be recorded in the councils' minutes. However certain types of Human Resource or other sensitive issues may under certain parts of legislation be exempt from publication. You may also send a letter, fax or email of complaint to your council, but the council may ask you to complete their complaints form as this allows the council to keep a consistent record of communications on complaints. **You can also complete the form online, (see website: www.warslowandelkstonespc.org)**

Nature of a complaint

Before making a complaint, it is important to contact the council to ensure the council is the Responsible Body to handle the complaint. It is also important to clearly identify and document the details of the complaint. The way in which a complaint is handled is dependent on the nature of the complaint and different types of complaint will be handled in different ways.

Complaints Form

Name of Parish Council: Warslow & Elkstones

Address: FAO: The Clerk, Mrs S Hampson
The Old Shippon, Under the Hill
Earl Sterndale, Buxton,
Derbyshire, SK17 0RN

Date	
Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Daytime Phone Number	
Evening Phone Number	
Please sign:	

To register a complaint please complete & return this form with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint to your parish council.

Please continue your comments on a separate sheet if necessary.

Nature of Complaint: Please give details below:
1. What you wish to complain about to the Parish Council
2. When & where the situation took place, including, if possible, details such as time, day, date & location.
3. The names & if possible, contact details of any others involved
4. In your opinion, what action or decision would resolve the matter