

Review Date	Revision History
June 2024	Proposed Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy

The purpose of a Complaints Procedure is to put things right if things go wrong. In the first instance attempts should be made to resolve the matter informally and the complaint should be discussed with the Clerk who is also the Proper Officer of the Council. Mistakes and misunderstandings are often resolved informally at this stage. However, if the Clerk cannot resolve the concern or issue to your satisfaction, this procedure sets out the process the council will follow to deal with complaints about Halsall Parish Council's administration, policy decisions and procedures.

This complaints procedure is not appropriate for councillor conduct which is alleged to be in breach of the council's Code of Conduct. Such complaints should be directed to the Monitoring Officer, West Lancs Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancs, L39 2DF.

This procedure is not appropriate for alleged criminal activity. Such complaints should be directed to the police.

Complaints about the Council's decisions, procedures or administration:

1. All formal complaints against a local council must be communicated in writing to the Clerk and can be emailed to HalsallParishClerk@gmail.com or posted to Chris Pyne, Parish Clerk, 36 Heathey Lane, Shirdley Hill, Ormskirk, L39 8SH.
2. If the complaint concerns the Clerk, it should be sent to the Clerk's address and marked for the attention of the Chair of Halsall Parish Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing in ten working days of receipt and will confirm the next steps in the procedure.
4. The Clerk will advise the council that there has been a complaint (though not of its substance) and the council will determine whether the complaint will be heard by the Clerk or by a complaints committee. The complaints committee shall consist of 3 councillors and the Clerk will provide advice and administrative support.

The process:

5. The Clerk/council will investigate the facts of the complaint and collate relevant evidence. The complainant may provide additional information to those investigating.
6. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to make verbal representations and if so, will be invited to a meeting.

7. If there is no meeting with the complainant, the Clerk/complaints committee will determine the complaint and advise the complainant when a decision is likely.
8. If there is to be a meeting, the complainant shall provide the Clerk any new information or other evidence relating to the complaint three working days before the meeting.
9. The meeting procedure will be as follows:
 - i) The complainant will be offered the opportunity to outline the grounds for complaint and the Clerk/Committee may ask questions.
 - ii) The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and the complainant may ask questions.
 - iii) Both parties will sum up.
 - iv) The Clerk/committee chair will advise the complainant when a decision is likely and how it will be conveyed.
10. The Council will write to the complainant confirming whether it has upheld the complaint within ten working days of determining the complaint. The council will give reasons for its decision with details of any action to be taken as appropriate.

Appeal

11. If you wish to appeal against the decision, you must inform Halsall Parish Council, within three working days of the written confirmation of the decision.
12. In the event of an appeal of a decision by the complaints committee, the council shall set up an appeals committee with different membership to the first committee. The appeal committee will review the evidence and the reasons for the decision and report within 14 working days.
13. The decision of the appeals committee is final.

Adopted by the Council June 2024