

Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen Parish Council's **administration and procedures**. It applies to the Council's employees. Councillors are covered by Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 14 June 2012. Complaints against **policy decisions** made by the Council shall be referred back to Council [but note paragraph 7 of the Council's Standing Orders, which says that issues shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 4 members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.

If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk to the Council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.

10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
15. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. Decision confirmed in writing within ten working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Serial Complaints

17. In the event of serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the council should consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to the complainant.

Appeals

18. If the complaint cannot be settled with the Parish Council the matter can be taken up with

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

The Local Government Ombudsman will ask if the complainant has tried to resolve the problem with the Parish Council in the first instance.