



IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Iron Acton Parish Council strives to provide a high standard of service to its parishioners. Parishioners' views are important to the Council and help it to ensure that its services and activities meet their needs. If parishioners are unhappy with any of its actions or services the Council would welcome feedback.
- b. The Council welcomes informal suggestions for improvements and these may be made orally or in writing to the Clerk or to individual councillors. It recognises, however, that circumstances may arise where parishioners feel it more appropriate to make a formal complaint. These procedures set out the mechanism for making and dealing with such a complaint.

2. MAKING A COMPLAINT

- a. The Council aims to handle complaints quickly and effectively and in a fair and open-minded way. It takes all complaints seriously and will use them to help improve the service it provides. All complaints will be treated in confidence within the Parish Council.
- b. Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Clerk of the Council or, where the complaint concerns the actions of the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Council. Their contact details can be found on the Parish Council's website or can be obtained from any Iron Acton Parish Councillor.
- c. Complaints can be made in person or through an advocate or representative, by letter or by email.
- d. The Clerk to the Council has responsibility, in the first instance, for dealing with all formal complaints made about Iron Acton Parish Council, unless the complaint involves the Clerk. In the latter case the procedure will be as below, but with the Chairman of the Council acting in place of the Clerk.
- e. In certain circumstances at the discretion of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk, a decision may be made to instruct an approved third party to conduct the investigation of and determination of complaints and to permit such necessary expense.

3. HOW COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED

- a. The Clerk will acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days and will undertake the investigation, unless a third party has been appointed to undertake the investigation. In doing so the Clerk / Investigator may request further details or evidence from the



complainant. The Clerk / Investigator will aim to complete any investigation within 28 days of receipt. Where this is not possible the complainant will be kept informed of progress on the complaint, in writing.

- b. Once the investigation is complete the Clerk / Investigator will produce a provisional written report and arrange to discuss the report and conclusions with the complainant, together with any proposed action. The Clerk / Investigator will record any further observations the complainant may have and then present a final report to the next meeting of the Council, setting out the complaint, the results of the investigation, recommendations for action and the complainant's further observations.
- c. Once the Council has made a decision the complainant will be informed in writing, within 7 working days, of the outcome of the investigation and the proposed action to resolve the complaint.

4. FURTHER STEPS

- a. If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of the Council's investigation she/he may refer the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman LGO). The LGO provides a free, independent service. It can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman
P.O. Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Or a complaint form can be completed online at www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO will not normally investigate a complaint unless the Council has had an opportunity to respond and try to resolve matters.

5. BREACHES OF CODE OF CONDUCT

- a. A complaint that a Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct is not covered by these procedures as the responsibility for dealing with this lies with South Gloucestershire Council's Monitoring Officer. Such complaints should be addressed to:

South Gloucestershire Council
Chief Executive & Corporate Resources Department
The Monitoring Officer
PO Box 1953
Bristol
BS37 0DB

By email to Legalsupport@southglos.gov.uk

Or a complaint form can be completed online at www.southglos.gov.uk



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