



KEWSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

“Here to protect the Rural Character and Environment of the Village and to promote Kewstoke as a pleasant place to live”

Complaint Procedures

KPC9994

How to Initiate a Complaint

Verbal complaint- initial complaints should be made verbally, in person, or by telephone, to the Clerk of the council on 07836 386244.

This type of complaint is most appropriate for some minor matter such as the need for repair to property owned or operated by the council, a faulty street light, or play equipment etc.

A verbal complaint will normally be dealt with directly by the Clerk, or their nominated representative, without any need for a response.

You may make a complaint to a councillor if you wish, although a councillor has no authority to act as an individual and must refer the matter to the Clerk.

In all cases the complaint will be recorded on the Council's Complaint form.

Written complaint- should you need to register a written complaint where a verbal complaint has failed or the matter is more complex, please complete a copy of the council's complaints form and complete this with any information you wish to provide to support your complaint.

A complaints form can be obtained from, and should be returned to: Parish Clerk 35 Beach Road Sand Bay Kewstoke BS22 9UU

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".

Ordinarily, written complaints of matters of a serious nature will be recorded in the council's minutes, once they are resolved. However, certain sensitive issues, and certain human resource issues, may be legislatively exempt from publication.

You may, of course, also initiate a written complaint by letter or email, but the council may ask you to subsequently complete the complaints form in order to keep a consistent record of communications of complaints.

Please note that before making a formal written complaint, it is advisable to contact us to ensure that the council is, indeed, the "Responsible Body" to handle your particular complaint.

The way in which a complaint is handled is then also dependent on the nature and specifics of each case.

This tables outlines how complaints will be handled by the Council.

| Nature of the Complaint | How to Complain | Who to Complain to | Who will deal with your complaint |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| Council Process Procedures Services | The Clerk will provide you with a complaint form | The Clerk | You will receive a written reply from the Clerk The matter may have been debated at a Council meeting. If so the Clerks response will be based on the decision of the Council. |
| Financial Irregularity | The Clerk will provide you with a complaint form Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your Complaint. | The Clerk | The Clerk will provide an explanation |

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|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Conduct of employee | The Clerk will provide you with a complaint form | <p>The Clerk unless the complaint is about the Clerk.</p> <p>In this is the case the complaint should be sent to the Chairman, it should be sealed and marked private and confidential.</p> | <p>The complaint may be resolved or escalated and be treated as an internal disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the councils Employee disciplinary procedure.</p> <p>In the event that the matter escalates the Council will provide a copy of the disciplinary procedure on request.</p> |
| Criminal Activity | In writing including any relevant information to support your concern | The Police | <p>The Police</p> <p>Depending on severity of the matter may go to court</p> |
| Conduct of a Councillor | This type of complaint needs to be referred in writing to NSDC as the principle authority, as the Parish Council has no power to investigate the conduct of one of its own elected or co opted members. | The monitoring Officer at NSDC. | <p>The Monitoring Officer</p> <p>The matter may be referred to the Local Standards Committee</p> |

Formal 3-stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: We will send you a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days. This will tell you who will be dealing with your complaint and the timeframe for investigation. We will ask you whether you wish to make verbal representation to the council and whether you wish to be accompanied. We will tell you what will happen next. You must tell us, at the outset, if you want your complaint to be treated confidentially. If so, we will comply with our obligations under the Data

Protection Act 1998. The department the complaint is about will investigate and aim to resolve your complaint as soon as possible. We aim to respond within 10 working days at this stage; however, if we need longer to investigate we will ask for your agreement to this beforehand.

Stage 2: If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response you can ask for your complaint to move to Stage 2. This is an independent investigation by someone, nominated by the Clerk, unconnected with the service concerned. If your complaint is in connection with the Clerk, the investigation will be carried out by the Chairman of the relevant committee. At Stage 2 we aim to complete the investigation process within 20 working days from the date the statement of complaint is received. More complex complaints may take longer. We will let you know if we need longer to respond.

Stage 3: If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response you can refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO is a national commission which is independent. The LGO will normally only consider a complaint after it has been through all stages of our complaints process.

Compliments and Suggestions

We are also looking for your positive and constructive comments to help us improve our service. Tell us what you think we do well, suggestions for improvements, or any other comments you would like to make. Please write to the address above, send an email to Parishclerkkewstoke@gmail.com or telephone on 07836 386244

Adopted 4th July 2022