

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parish Councils are committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live, work or visit the area, irrespective of age, sex, race or disability. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the standard of service received from the Council, or is unhappy about an action, or lack of action by the Council, is entitled to make either an Informal or Formal complaint. This procedure sets out how such complaints should be made and how the Council will try to resolve them. **This procedure does not relate to complaints received about the services delivered by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council or any other body.**

Informal Complaints

It is not appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under the formal complaints procedure. It is hoped that less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk will resolve most issues raised by a member of the public. Any informal complaint will be reported to the Council for information.

Formal Complaints

In certain circumstances procedures/bodies other than Caverswall Parish Council may be appropriate in respect of the following types of complaint:-

Type of Conduct	Refer to
Financial Irregularity	Statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. On other matters the Council may need to consult its auditor/Audit Commission
Criminal activity	Police
Member Conduct	If the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Localism Act 2011 it must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision making is by raising any concerns before Council debates and votes on a matter. This may be done in writing to the Clerk, or during the public participation section at the start of each monthly Council meeting.

This procedure applies where the Council, including its employees, has:

- done something wrong
- done something it should not have done
- failed to do something it should have done
- behaved unfairly or discourteously
- not carried out a service to a recognised standard or within an acceptable timescale.

The procedure does not apply where:

- an initial complaint is a necessary part of a request for a service
- the complaint is against an individual Councillor. This is covered by the Council's Code of Conduct and such complaints should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- separate procedures exist for staff grievances, disciplinary matters and confidential reporting (whistle blowing)

Procedure

- (a) All complaints received must be recorded. Every attempt to resolve the complaint immediately must be made.
- (b) If complaints cannot be resolved immediately, they must be formally acknowledged.
- (c) The Council will aim to provide an initial response within 10 days. Should it be deemed necessary, an investigation will be completed and a full response given within 28 days. If a CAVERSWALL PARISH COUNCIL full response cannot be given within 28 days, for example where additional outside information is required, then the acknowledgement letter should give a specific timescale.
- (d) If a complainant indicates that they would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk, they shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.
- (e) Where the Clerk or Chairman receive a written complaint about his or her own actions, the complaint will be forwarded to full Council.
- (f) Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation, then the complaint will be reviewed by the Officer conducting the investigation and reported to full Council for a final decision.

Records

A full record of complaints will be kept in order that anyone reviewing a complaint either internally or externally can see the action taken, and why.

The record will contain a description of the complaint, any correspondence sent to and received from the complainant, written notes of conversations (including date and time) and any other documents used in the course of the investigation and details of actions taken.

All promises of action and agreements will be recorded along with dates and times.

Contact Details

Complaints should be made in writing to the Clerk in the first instance by one of the following:

Post – Caverswall Parish Council, The Gables, 504 Weston Road. Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 6QD

Email – clerk@caverswall.staffslc.gov.uk

Website – www.caverswallparishcouncil.co.uk using the 'Contact Us' page

Should any complainant wish to send a complaint directly to the Chair then this should be made in writing, using the post address above, with the envelope clearly marked "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL". The Clerk will then pass this to the Chair unopened.

Review History	To be reviewed annually
Adopted on	6 th April 2021
Date of next review	May 2022