

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

This complaints procedure has been adapted from the national model procedure published by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

The model is based on the guidance on handling complaints produced by the Local Government Ombudsman.

This document sets out how you may complain to Whimple Parish Council and how we shall go about resolving your complaint.

Scope of the Complaints Procedure

Whimple Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in the Whimple area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of the service you have received, or unhappy about an action/lack of action by Whimple Parish Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain and how we shall try to resolve it.

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration, procedures and services and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

The Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints between an employee and Whimple Parish Council as the employer. These matters are dealt with under WPC's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Complaints against Councillors. East Devon District Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to have in place arrangements for dealing with allegations that members, and co-opted members have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. They also investigate and determine those allegations. All complaints must be made in writing. Their arrangements cover district councillors, parish and town councillors within East Devon and co-opted members of those councils. To make a complaint about a Councillor, please email monitoringofficer@eastdevon.gov.uk, telephone 01395 517535 or write to the Monitoring Officer, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, Devon, EX14 1EJ.
- This procedure only applies to issues or actions conducted in the previous 6 months. Complaints outside of this timeframe will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The appropriate time for influencing decision making is by raising your concerns before Whimple Parish Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to Whimple Parish Council in advance of the meeting where the item is to be

discussed or by contacting your Parish Councillor(s). Meeting agendas are published at least three clear days before the date of the meeting. You can find out who your ward members are, and view agendas and minutes of meeting on the Whimble Parish Council website: www.whimbleparishcouncil.org

Meetings include a 'Public Participation' session, where you have the opportunity to raise concerns or ask questions. This is always early on the agenda.

1. If you are unhappy with the decision that has been made, you may raise your concerns with Whimble Parish Council, but Standing Orders prevent the re-opening of an issue for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and this process is set out in Standing Orders. A copy of the document can be obtained from the Whimble Parish Council website.
2. Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Parish Clerk by emailing whimbleparishcouncil@gmail.com and may be acted on at their discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.
3. If your complaint is about the Parish Clerk, the Chair/Vice-Chair of Whimble Parish Council will manage the process of the complaint, with advice being sought from the Devon Association of Local Councils (if appropriate).
4. Some disputes may have to be handled outside of this Complaints Procedure, for instance where legal proceedings are involved or where a claim for compensation is made that we need to refer to our insurers. If this is the case, the Parish Clerk will seek legal advice before advising you of the process to be followed.

Informal Procedure

5. You may make a complaint about Whimble Parish Council's procedures, services or administration to the Parish Clerk. You may do this in writing/by email: Amy Tregellas – Parish Clerk
Whimble Parish Council, Whimble Victory Hall, School Hill, Whimble, EX5 2TS
whimbleparishcouncil@gmail.com
6. Wherever possible, the Parish Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately and without referring to the formal procedure. If this is not possible, the Parish Clerk will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and will instigate the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

7. If the formal procedure is invoked, you will be asked to put your complaint in writing, either on paper or by email. You must submit your name, address and a telephone number or email address where you can be contacted. The Parish Clerk will investigate your complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and Councillors where appropriate.
8. The Parish Clerk will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and what action (if any) Whimble Parish Council proposes to take as a

result. In exceptional circumstances, the 20 working days timescale may have to be extended, but you will be informed of this.

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint

9. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the next Full Council meeting of Whimple Parish Council. This referral will be made by the Parish Clerk or Chair/Vice Chair of Whimple Parish Council at their discretion.
10. You will be notified of the outcome of the review of your original complaint, usually within eight weeks of the complaint, although this procedure may be extended in exceptional circumstances.