



Appleton Parish Council

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Complaints Procedure

Adopted by Appleton Parish Council by resolution on 16 June 2026 and will be reviewed periodically thereafter.

Reviewed:

1. Introduction

Appleton Parish Council (the Council) is committed to providing a good quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in its area and also for visitors to the locality. If you are not satisfied with the standard of service that you have received from this Council, or you are not satisfied with an action or lack of action from this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may bring your concern to the Council and how the Council will try to resolve matters.

This Complaints Procedure applies to matters affecting Council administration and procedures and may also be used to deal with complaints about your dealings with Council employees.

2. This Complaints procedure does not apply to: -

- Complaints by one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as employer, or between a Council employee and a councillor or ex councillor. These matters are dealt with under the Council's other procedures.
- Complaints against councillors in connection with the Council's Councillor Code of Conduct Policy. If the Council receives any complaints against a councillor, the matter will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Warrington Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors can be obtained from Warrington Borough Council.
- Complaints for which there is a legal remedy, or where legal proceedings already exist.

3. The Importance of Comments and Complaints

Comments and complaints are of use to the Council in that they provide an opportunity to make things right if there has been an error and to use the experience as a learning exercise to improve services and procedures in the future.

4. Complaint Definitions

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service or the actions or lack of actions by Appleton Parish Council or its employees or volunteers working with the Council.

5. How to start the complaints process

The first point of contact with the Council should be the Parish Clerk or, if that is not appropriate, the Chair of the Council. If the person making the complaint wishes and it is more appropriate or convenient to them, they may contact any of the parish councillors as

their first point of contact. The councillor will then inform the Parish Clerk and/or the Chair of the Council as appropriate.

Initially, complaints can be made either verbally or in writing. However, written complaints presented in letter or email form help to prevent misunderstandings.

6. The Stages of the Complaints procedure

6.1 Day to day minor queries and comments

Problem solving, resolving queries and providing comments are part of the day-to-day operations of the Council and generally should not be regarded as complaints. These types of matters are routine and should hopefully be solved quickly and to the complainant's satisfaction.

If someone is not satisfied with the initial response from the Council and they wish to take the matter further, the matter should be recognised as a complaint.

6.2 Informal complaints

During the course of day-to-day business, minor complaints may be made to the Council. These will usually be dealt with by the Parish Clerk and Council as appropriate. Efforts should be made to deal with these problems as soon as possible, either by providing information, explaining a decision, or by instigating the appropriate action. It is not appropriate for every complaint to be treated as a formal complaint.

6.3 Formal complaints

A person or organisation may wish to make a formal complaint directly, or they may not be satisfied with the progress or outcome of an informal complaint and may wish to take the matter further. A formal complaint to the Council must be presented in writing, either in letter form, or by email, addressed to the Parish Clerk or Chair of the Parish Council as appropriate.

Once received, the formal complaint will be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee or to the Council, as appropriate. The Parish Clerk will also officially record the complaint.

The Parish Clerk and/or the Finance and General Purposes Committee and/or the Council will thoroughly investigate the complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant, and/or from Council employees or volunteers and/or members of the Council.

The Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Council will notify the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of the complaint.

6.3.1 Timescales regarding the investigation

6.3.1.1 Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint – by return of post or email.

6.3.1.2 Notification of the results of the investigation process – within 20 working days is the target. If this period needs to be extended, the complainant will be kept informed.

6.3.2 Review of the complaint and investigation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Council regarding the results of the investigation, they will be advised that they have the right to have their complaint referred to the full Parish Council (as appropriate). The complainant will be notified in writing by the Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Council of the outcome of the review of the original complaint.

6.3.3 Timescales regarding referring the complaint for review by the full Parish Council

6.3.3.1 Written response by the Parish Clerk to a complainant's request to refer the matter to the full Council – within 10 working days.

6.3.3.2 Written notification of the results of the review by the Parish Council – within 8 weeks of the complainant's notification is the target. If this period needs to be extended, the complainant will be kept informed.

7.0 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Parish Clerk or Chair of the Council as appropriate. These complaints may or may not be acted upon depending upon the type and seriousness of the allegations made.