



WEM TOWN COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

The following procedure should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint against Wem Town Council.

If you have a **complaint against a Councillor**, you should write to: -

The Monitoring Officer
Shropshire Council
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

If you have a **complaint against an employee**, you should write to the Mayor : -

The Mayor
Wem Town Council
Council Offices
Edinburgh House
New Street
Wem
SY4 5DB

If you have **any other complaint** you should write to the Clerk to the Council: -

Penny O'Hagan
Wem Town Council
Council Offices
Edinburgh House
New Street
Wem
SY4 5DB

In order for your complaint about the Town Council to be dealt with, the following Code of Practice has been adopted; so that you can be assured that your grievance will be properly and fully considered. We hope that by following this transparent process, we shall maintain the good reputation of the council. This procedure will be followed where complaints cannot be resolved less formally by the Clerk to the Council or the Mayor.

The Clerk to the Council is the Proper Officer of the Council and will represent and advise the Council at any meeting where the complaint will be aired, unless the Clerk is putting forward the justification for action or procedure of the complaint.

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. All complaints about the Council's procedures or administration should be given in writing to the Clerk to the Council.
2. If the complainant does not wish to write to the Clerk the complaint should be addressed to the Mayor.
3. Receipt of the complaint shall be acknowledged by the Clerk and the complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered by the Council as soon as is practicable.
4. A meeting will be arranged for the complaint to be heard and the complainant will be invited to attend. The complainant is entitled to bring a representative if they wish.
5. At least 7 clear working days before the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with supporting documentation or evidence to substantiate the complaint against the council. The complainant will also be provided with relevant documentation to which the Council will rely upon when the complaint is heard at the meeting.
6. Under Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the Council will decide whether the complaint warrants the exclusion of the public and press. The decision of the Council however, will be made public at the conclusion of the meeting.

Procedure of the Meeting

1. Chairman's introduction of those present at the meeting and explanation of procedure to be followed
2. Complainant (or representative of the complainant) will outline the nature of the complaint and the reason
3. Members of the Town Council will question the complainant
4. The Clerk to the Council will explain the position of the council, if relevant
5. Members of the Town Council will question the Clerk to the Council.
6. The Clerk to the Council shall be offered the opportunity of a last word.
7. The Complainant shall be offered the opportunity of a last word
8. The Clerk to the Council and the complainant shall leave the meeting room while Members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been justified. Where clarification may be necessary both parties shall be invited to return to the meeting.
9. The Clerk to the Council and the complainant shall be present to hear the decision of the Council. If no decision can be reached, both parties shall be advised when a decision will be made.

After the Meeting

1. The Complainant will be notified of the decision in writing within 7 working days, and will also be notified of any action that may be taken.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS

From time to time the Town Council receives complaints from members of the public. Some complaints are received by telephone or in writing and some by a visit to the Town Clerk's office. In order to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively the Town Council has a Complaints Policy.

In the event that a complainant begins to make frequent contact with the Town Clerk and hinders the normal day to day running of the Town Council, the Town Clerk will implement a policy for dealing with frequent or vexatious complainants, since such complaints can be time consuming and could lead to unnecessary additional cost to the council tax payer.

The Town Council's policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants will become operative if the complainant is deemed to be unreasonably persistent either by written or oral communication or excessive visits to the Town Clerk's office.

PROCEDURE

A vexatious complainant will be notified that the Council's Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complaints is to be enforced, together with the reason why.

The complainant will then be asked to adopt one or all of the following procedures

- Request contact with the Town Council in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- Request contact to take place with a councillor present;
- Restrict telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or be asked to enter into an agreement about future contact with the Town Council

The Council will decide how long it will spend on any one complaint and whether it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. In all cases where a complainant is deemed to be unreasonable and persistent, the Council will write to the complainant to justify its course of action and explain for how long it will be operative.

The complainant may challenge the Council's decision, although proof that the complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with will be required. However, if deemed to be a fair challenge the Council will conduct a review of the complaint and will reconsider whether the complaint should still be treated as unreasonable and/or vexatious.

This policy was adopted on 15.12.16 and will be reviewed annually.