

Avebury Parish Council

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Introduction

1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not. It is generally in the interests of the complainant and Parish Council to try to resolve matters informally through normal channels of communication rather than referring to the Council's formal complaints procedure.
2. If you prefer simply to tell us about something you were not happy with but do not wish to have any further involvement you can make an **informal complaint**. We will make a note of your complaint, endeavor to investigate further and resolve the issue if possible.
3. This complaints procedure covers complaints about the actions, operations and services of the Council as a body and the conduct of its employee(s). It does not cover complaints against an individual councillor or members' behaviour. The procedure for reporting these is outlined below.
4. When dealing with your complaint Avebury Parish Council will:
 - respect your right to confidentiality
 - deal with your complaint sensitively, effectively and promptly
 - be transparent, fair and impartial

The Parish Council's formal complaints procedure

1. A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Parish Council or where the complaint is regarding an employee of the Parish Council the complaint must be made in writing to the Chairman.
2. The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman will acknowledge in writing within ten working days that your complaint has been received, confirm if the complaint will be treated as confidential and provide information on the next steps in the process.
3. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Avebury Parish Council will investigate the complaint and will offer you the opportunity of a meeting to discuss your complaint and obtain more information.
4. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will write to you within 30 working days of your complaint to inform you of the outcome of the investigation. If your complaint is upheld you will receive a written apology including reasons for the decision, information on any improvements that will be made and information on any disciplinary action which will be taken in accordance with the Parish Council's internal disciplinary procedure. Please note: an apology is not an acceptance of liability under Section 2 of the Compensation Act 2006.
5. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you have the right to appeal and put your case to the next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council in person. The meeting would be held in a confidential session and without members of the press or public in attendance.
 - Members of the Parish Council are free to raise matters of concern in respect of Council business by submission of motion(s) on the agenda for relevant meeting(s) where the issue can be formally considered and resolved.
 - If an employee has a complaint about the workplace he or she may raise this in accordance with the Parish Council's internal grievance procedure.

Complaints against an individual councillor

A Parish Council does not have the authority to deal with a complaint regarding the behaviour of a member of the Council. This is the remit of the Monitoring Officer/Standards Committee of Wiltshire Council. The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a councillor and it will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors' Code of Conduct. For further information please refer to the Parish Council's own Code of Conduct accessible from the Clerk or the Parish Council's website and then use the complaints' procedure on Wiltshire Council's website: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/complaints/membercomplaints.htm> If a member of the public is not happy with the outcome of a decision by Wiltshire Council he or she has the right to appeal.

Vexatious, anonymous and frivolous complaints

The Parish Council will not respond to vexatious, anonymous and frivolous complaints.