

CHURCHILL & BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

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

At all times during the process, the council must comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

What this procedure does not cover

1. Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as an employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
2. Complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council in 2026 and if a complaint against a councillor is received by the Parish Council it will be referred to Wyre Forest District Council in line with this policy. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Wyre Forest District Council, here <https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/transparency-and-freedom-of-information/freedom-of-information-publication-scheme/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/chief-officers-information/role-of-the-officers/> or by contacting **01562 732928**.
3. Complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council outside his/her Parish Council duties and responsibilities.

Procedure

1. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by contacting the Parish Office in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed, or by contacting a Parish Councillor. A list of Parish Councillors can be found on the Parish website here: www.churchillandblakedown-pc.gov.uk/parish-councillors
2. Parish Council meeting agendas are published at least 3 days before all meetings and may be viewed on Parish noticeboards or on the Parish website. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings.

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3. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
4. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures, services or administration to the Parish Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk:

Louise Harris
Clerk to the Council
18 Winds Point
Hagley
DY9 0PN

Or by email to clerk@churchillandblakedown-pc.gov.uk

Tel: 07828 335949

5. 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 Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days and will instigate the formal procedure.
6. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will liaise with the Clerk in resolving your complaint.
7. If the formal procedure is invoked you will be asked to put your complaint in writing, either on paper or by email and the following information must be submitted as a minimum: -
 - i) Details of the complaint including relevant events, dates, names of relevant members, staff, or contractors of the council.
 - ii) Evidence to support the complaint.
 - iii) Contact details.
 - iv) State if the complaint is to be treated confidentially.
8. The Parish Clerk will investigate your complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you or members of the Council (as appropriate).
9. The Clerk will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take because of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

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10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Full Parish Council. This referral will be made by the Clerk or Chairman of the Council at their discretion, and the result of the referral will be reported in the minutes of that meeting. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint, usually within 8 weeks of the complaint, although this period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.
11. If the complaint is about the Parish Clerk, the Chairman of the Council will manage the process for the complaint in conjunction with another suitable officer, most probably a Senior Officer from Wyre Forest District Council.
12. Some disputes may need to be handled outside of this complaint's procedure, for instance where legal proceedings are involved or where a claim for compensation is made which 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.