



## STOKE MANDEVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND POLICY

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#### INTRODUCTION

1. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area 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.
2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. Complaints sometimes arise due to a misunderstanding or a misconception. If you prefer to discuss your concerns informally with either the Clerk or the Chairman of the Council or the source of the complaint, please contact the Clerk. Such action does not prevent you following the formal complaints procedure as set out below.
4. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
  - 4.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
  - 4.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and, if a
  - 4.3. complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Aylesbury Vale District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Aylesbury Vale District Council.
5. 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 writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. 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.

#### BEFORE THE MEETING

6. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this by writing to or emailing, the addresses are set out at the end of this document.
7. 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 report your complaint to the Council.

8. The Clerk or other nominated office will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council. The complainant will also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether notice of it will be given in the usual way if the complaint is heard by a committee or the full Council.
9. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
10. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

#### **AT THE MEETING**

11. The council shall consider whether the circumstance of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
12. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
13. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complain and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii) members.
14. The Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.
15. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
16. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back in.
17. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be give the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day, they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

#### **AFTER THE MEETING**

18. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

#### **CONTACTS**

Clerk to Stoke Mandeville Parish Council  
 Address: The Community Centre  
 Eskdale Road  
 Stoke Mandeville  
 Bucks HP22 5UJ  
 Telephone: 01296 613888  
 Email: [smparishcouncil@btconnect.com](mailto:smparishcouncil@btconnect.com)

Chairman of Stoke Mandeville Parish Council  
 Address: The Community Centre  
 Eskdale Road  
 Stoke Mandeville  
 HP22 5UJ  
 Telephone: 01296 613217  
 Email: [hunt936@btinternet.com](mailto:hunt936@btinternet.com)