

LACOCK PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Complaints Policy adopted by Lacock Parish Council at a meeting held on 8th June 2015.

The following Complaints Policy is intended to assist local residents to deal with complaints against the Parish Council's administration or its procedures. This policy does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council.

Lacock Parish Council will not acknowledge or consider, under any circumstances, complaints that are submitted anonymously.

Complaints handled by the Clerk to the Parish Council

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route.

If a complaint about procedures or administration of the Parish Council is notified orally to a member of the Parish Council, or to the Clerk to the Parish Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council by e-mail (stewardpc@btinternet.com) or by letter addressed to:-

Clerk to the Council, The Griffin, Bowden Hill Lacock. Chippenham Wills. SN15 2PP.

The complaint will be dealt with within twenty one (21) working days of receipt.

Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.

It is expected that most complaints can be resolved through this route. However, the Parish Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach had not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is so serious or that the complaint is being raised against the Clerk to the Parish Council, then the formal complaints process should be followed.

Complaints handled by the Parish Council

A formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Chairman of Lacock Parish Council. The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant support documentation.

The Clerk or Chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, in writing, within ten (10) working days.

The Clerk or Chairman will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within twenty one (21) working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed

The Clerk or Chairman will report to the Parish Council, summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution. This summary report will exclude the names of the complainants and any members of the Parish Council involved.

If the Clerk or Chairman is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution than the matter will be referred to the next parish Council meeting.

As soon as possible after the decision has been made {and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting} the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

The Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

Complaints against members of the Parish Council

The Lacock Parish Council complaints policy does not cover complaints against an individual member of the Parish Council. If anyone wishes to make a complaint about the behaviour of an individual member, they must write to:-

The Monitoring Officer,
Wiltshire Council,
Bythesea Road,
Trowbridge,
Wilts BA14 8JN

The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a member of the Parish Council. It will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct. Complaints must be about a member of the Parish Council's failure to follow the Code of Conduct.

Repeated or vexatious complaints

A small percentage of complaints may be persistent or complain in a way that appears to be obsessive, harassing or repetitious. This will require a disproportionate amount of resource and can sometimes act in a manner that is unacceptably stressful for staff.

Whilst everyone has the right to make a legitimate complaint, they are not entitled to do so in a way that is unreasonable or which has the effect of intimidating or harassing members of Lacock Parish Council. A vexatious or persistent complaint can be characterized in a number of ways:

- Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason; and
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable matter