

Charmouth Parish Council

Council Office The Elms St Andrew's Drive Charmouth Bridport Dorset DT6 6LN



Telephone (01297) 560826 E-Mail clerk@charmouthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Complaints Procedure

1. Charmouth 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 the Council, or are unhappy about an action, or lack of action by the Council, this document sets out how you may make a complaint and how we will deal with it.
2. If you wish to complain about a policy decision, the actions or inactions of the Council as a whole, there are a number of ways in which you can make your views known to us.
 - 2.1. 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:
 - 2.1.1. speaking or writing to any Councillor;
 - 2.1.2. writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed;
 - 2.1.3. raising your concerns in the public participation section of a Council meeting.
 - 2.2. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders and Legislation prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of decision, unless there are exceptional circumstances, as set out in the Council's Standing Orders.
3. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.
4. This table sets out the appropriate ways in which you can make a complaint.

If your complaint is about:	Address your complaint to:
The actions or inactions of a Council employee	The Parish Clerk
The actions or inactions of the Parish Clerk	The HR Committee
A Councillor's failure to adhere to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct	Dorset Council Monitoring Officer

5. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to 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.
6. You should make your complaint about the Council's procedures in writing/email to the Clerk (The Elms, St Andrews Drive, Charmouth, DT6 6LN; clerk@charmouthparishcouncil.gov.uk).
7. Wherever possible, Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

8. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Parish Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chair of the Council via the address above or the Council’s website (please make it clear that it is for the attention of the Chair).
9. Wherever possible, the Chair will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Chair will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
 - 9.1. If your complaint concerns a Council employee, the Chair will refer your complaint to the HR Committee of the Council.
 - 9.2. If your complaint concerns the Council’s procedures, the Chair will discuss your complaint with the Parish Clerk, and if necessary, will refer it either to the relevant Committee or to a full Council meeting.
10. The Clerk, Chair, or the HR Committee of the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.
11. The Clerk or the Chair of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)
12. 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 resources and can sometimes act in a manner that it 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 staff. A vexatious or persistent complaint can be characterised in a number of ways:
 - Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitive;
 - Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
 - Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.

A complainant can only be considered vexatious once a decision has been passed to that effect by resolution of the Council giving the reason and scope. This will be confirmed in writing to the complainant.
13. If you are dissatisfied with our response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full Council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

Agreed by Council:	March 2022	
Review due:	January 2025	