



St. Anne's on the Sea Town Council Complaint Procedure

St. Anne's on the Sea Town Council is committed to providing quality services for the people who live and work in the parish and visitors to the area.

Introduction

The following procedure is adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints can also be made about a policy decision made by the Council. If the complaint is about the attitude or conduct of an officer, these matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

If the complaint is from a tenant of Blundell Road Allotments or Shepherd Road Allotments, tenants must contact either Blundell Road Allotment Committee or Shepherd Road Allotment Association, dependent on which site the tenant is located. There is an Allotments Committee/Association complaints procedure to complete before the Town Council complaints procedure is instigated.

What to do

If you wish to make a complaint to St. Anne' on the Sea Town Council, please follow the steps outlined below.

If you feel that this Council has not acted correctly, or failed to act when it should have done, the first thing you should do is contact the Town Clerk and ask for the situation to be rectified or for an explanation as to why the Council acted in the way it had. If you prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council, you should write to the Chairman at the Town Council's offices; address detailed at the foot of the procedure.

To help the Council deal effectively with your complaint, you will need to inform the Council of the following information (in writing please);

- **What the problem is and how it occurred**
- **How it has affected you**
- **What you consider should be done now to put the matter right**

What can I complain about?

A complaint must be about something specific. It is most likely to be about one or more of the following:

- The standard of service provided by the Council
- Failure by the Council to provide an agreed service
- Failure by the Council to respond to a request for one of its services
- That the Council has exceeded its powers
- The Council has not followed an agreed procedure

How will the complaint be dealt with?

When dealing with any complaints made in accordance with the Complaint Procedure, three basic principles will apply and the Council undertakes to:

- 1 Investigate a complaint as quickly and impartially as possible - this will initially be carried out by the Town Council Clerk (see contact details at the foot of this procedure)
- 2 Provide the complainant with a response which outlines the findings of the investigation
- 3 Wherever possible resolve the matter

Complaint Timescales

The Council has set the following timescales for complaint resolution;

- Receipt of complaint – 5 working days
- Response to complaint – 28 working days (if the Town Clerk is unable to comply with this timescale, the complainant will be notified)
- Complaint resolution – with the most expedient time available

What is not covered

Please note: This Complaint Procedure does not cover:

- **Requests for a service**
- **Requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice**
- **Matters for which there is an existing right of appeal (either within the Council itself or to an independent tribunal) or legal remedy**
- **Complaints made more than 12 months after the events occurred; unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the complaint could not have brought within this time.**

For any of the above, please contact the Town Clerk with your query or concerns.

What if you are not satisfied with our response?

1. If you consider the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, please write to the Town Clerk, who will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 14 working days. The Town Clerk will provide a full response within 28 working days of receipt and what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. In exceptional circumstances the 28 working days timescale may require extending; if this happens you will be kept informed.
2. If still unresolved, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chairman of the Council who will endeavour the complaint is dealt with satisfactorily.
3. If further action is necessary, you may request that the matter be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration. A Town Council response will be given after the Policy and Resources Committee where the matter will be discussed.

How can I complain about the conduct of a Councillor?

If you wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of an individual member of the Council, you need to contact the local Monitoring Officer for St. Anne's on the Sea Town Councillors. This is Ms Tracy Manning, Director of Resources at Fylde Borough Council;

Telephone number 01253 658658

Web page <https://new.fylde.gov.uk/council/councillors/complaining-about-a-councillor/>

Email tracy.manning@fylde.gov.uk

Write to, Ms Tracy Manning, Director of Resources, Fylde Borough Council, Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St. Anne's on the Sea, Lancashire FY8 1LW

Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviours

The Town Council is a small organisation and does not have an unlimited amount of resources to deal with certain types of actions and behaviours. Single incidents of these may be unacceptable, but more often the difficulty is caused by unreasonably persistent behaviour that is time consuming to manage and interferes with proper consideration of the complaint; examples of these are:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- Refusing to cooperate with the complaint's investigation process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Making unjustified complaints about officers who are trying to deal with the issues and seeking to have them replaced.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Denying or changing statements made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage.
- Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.

- Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with various organisations.
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of Officers with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous Council Officers or Elected Members, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints.
- Refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.

A complainant who has been deemed by the Town Council to have behaved in an unreasonable manner and is an unreasonable complainant will be notified in writing from either the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.

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Adopted by St. Anne's Town Council

At the Policy and Resources Committee

On 29 October 2019