

# Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council

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## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

The following procedure should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint against Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council. If you have a complaint against a Councillor, you should write to:

**The Monitoring Officer  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shropshire Council  
Shire Hall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND**

If you have a complaint against a Parish Council employee, you should write to the Chairman. If you are posting a letter, please mark the envelope 'Private and Confidential':

**Councillor Erica Morgan  
Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council  
19 Rhewl Lane  
Gobowen  
Shropshire  
SY10 7XA  
ericamorgan@selattyn gobowen-pc.gov.uk**

If you have any other complaint you should write to the Parish Clerk: -

**Bridget Laraway  
Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council  
19 Rhewl Lane  
Gobowen  
Shropshire  
SY10 7XA  
clerk@selattyn gobowen-pc.gov.uk**

In order for your complaint about the Parish Council to be dealt with, the following Code of Practice has been adopted; so that you can be assured that your grievance will be properly and fully considered. We hope that by following this transparent process, we shall maintain the good reputation of the council.

This procedure will be followed where complaints cannot be resolved less formally by the Parish Clerk or the Chairman. The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and will represent and advise the Council at any meeting where the complaint will be aired unless the Parish Clerk is putting forward the justification for action or procedure of the complaint.

## **CODE OF PRACTICE**

1. All complaints about the Council's procedures or administration should be given in writing to the Parish Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to write to the Parish Clerk the complaint should be addressed to the council chairman.
3. Receipt of the complaint shall be acknowledged by the Parish Clerk and the complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered by the Council as soon as is practicable.
4. Receipt of a complaint about the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged by the Chairman.
5. A meeting will be arranged for the complaint to be heard and the complainant will be invited to attend. The complainant is entitled to bring a representative if they wish.
6. At least 7 clear working days before the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with supporting documentation or evidence to substantiate the complaint against the council. The meeting will not take place unless this is adhered to. The complainant will also be provided with relevant documentation to which the Council will rely upon when the complaint is heard at the meeting.
7. Under Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the Council will decide whether the complaint warrants the exclusion of the public and press. The decision of the Council however, will be made public at the conclusion of the meeting.

### **1.0 At the Meeting**

1.1 The Chairman to introduce everyone and explain procedures.

1.2 The Complainant will outline the nature of the complaint and the reason.

1.3 Councillors will question the complainant.

1.4 Councillors will question the Parish Clerk.

1.5 The Complainant and the Parish Clerk (in that order) will be given the opportunity of a last word.

1.6 The Complainant and the Parish Clerk will be asked to leave the room whilst councillors decide whether or not the grounds of the complaint have been made. Where clarification may be necessary both parties shall be invited to return to the meeting.

1.7 The Complainant and the Parish Clerk return to hear the decision or if no decision can be reached, both parties shall be advised when a decision will be made.

1.8 The Complainant will be notified of the decision in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken

## **2.0 After the Meeting**

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

2.2 The result of the proceedings will be reported at the next council meeting after the meeting with the complainant.

## **3.0 Appeals Process**

3.1 Should the complainant not agree with the decision they will be entitled to appeal the decision within fourteen days of receipt of the result of the proceedings.

3.2 The councillors nominated to handle the appeal will, within twenty-one days of receiving the appeal, examine the way in which the council dealt with the complaint.

3.3 If procedures were correctly handled by the council then the appellant will be notified that the appeal has not been successful. If the complaint was not handled correctly it will be referred back for consideration as at 1.0.

3.4 The appellant will be notified of the result of the appeals process within fourteen days.

3.5 The result of the appeal will be reported at the next council meeting after the appeal.

## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS**

From time to time the Parish Council receives complaints from members of the public. Some complaints are received by telephone or in writing and some by a visit to the Parish Clerk's office<sup>1</sup>. In order to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively the Parish Council has a Complaints Policy.

The Parish Council's administration is carried out by the Parish Clerk. In the event that a complainant begins to make frequent contact with the Parish Clerk and hinders the normal day to day running of the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk will implement a policy for dealing with frequent or vexatious complainants, since such complaints can be time consuming and could lead to unnecessary additional cost to the council tax payer.

The Parish Council's policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants will become operative if the complainant is deemed to be unreasonably persistent either by written or oral communication or excessive visits to the Parish Clerk's office.

### **PROCEDURE**

A vexatious complainant will be notified that the Council's Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complaints is to be enforced, together with the reason why.

The complainant will then be asked to adopt one or all of the following procedures

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that anyone visiting the Parish Clerk's office is required to make an appointment

- request contact with the Parish Council in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- Request contact to take place with a councillor present;
- Restrict telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or be asked to enter into an agreement about future contact with the Parish Council

The Council will decide how long it will spend on any one complaint and whether it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. In all cases where a complainant is deemed to be unreasonable and persistent, the Council will write to the complainant to justify its course of action and explain for how long it will be operative.

The complainant may challenge the Council's decision, although proof that the complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with will be required. However, if deemed to be a fair challenge the Council will conduct a review of the complaint and will reconsider whether the complaint should still be treated as unreasonable and/or vexatious.

**Reviewed: MAY 2022**

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**Next Review: MAY 2024**