



AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Audlem 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 Policy sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

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. 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. In this case, the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

This policy does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council. These are dealt with under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted on 19 July 2012 and may be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Cheshire East Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Cheshire East Council.

Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

1. This Complaints Policy applies to complaints about Councillors, Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.
2. Audlem Parish Council have adopted Cheshire East Council's (CEC) Code of Conduct so all complaints about a Councillor's failure to comply with the code of conduct will need to be made to CEC by the complainant directly to the Monitoring Officer. The matter will be considered by the Council's monitoring officer in consultation with an independent person. The monitoring officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor. You must set out why you believe the Councillor has not followed the relevant Code of Conduct and which sections of the Code you feel have been breached. The parties must not pass on information regarding the complaint. The complainant must write to MonitoringOfficerCEC@cheshireeast.gov.uk The Monitoring Officer may reply to say it should be dealt with internally but it must be reported to them first.

Further information can be found here

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/councillor_conduct.aspx

3. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.
4. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk to the 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.
5. You will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter or email) to the Clerk to the Council at 1 St Chads Way, Norton in Hales, Shropshire TF9 4AW. The complaint will be dealt with within 21 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.
6. If you prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example,) he or she should write to the Chair of the Council.

(a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment.

(b) Where the Clerk to the Council or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Council. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

At all stages further information will be sought as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

7. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.
8. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and you will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.
9. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.
10. The 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.
11. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) you will be notified in writing of the decision and any action (if appropriate) to be taken.

This Complaints Policy was reviewed and adopted at the Audlem Parish Council Meeting held on:

Date: 13th July 2020

Signed: Steve Boyes (Chairman/Vice-Chairman)

Signed: Belen Lopez Bloor (Proper Officer)

Original signed copy held on file by the Parish Clerk.