



Haslemere Town Council **Complaints Procedure**

The Procedure is split into three areas.

- **1:** *Complaints about the work the public perceive the Council undertakes (pot holes, broken street lights etc).*
- **2:** *Complaints against Council Staff.*
- **3:** *Complaints against Councillors.*

1: Complaints about the work the public perceive the Council undertakes (pot holes, broken street lights etc)

Council Members and staff in the employ of Haslemere Town Council must deal with work complaints in the following manner.

- If the complaint is written, it should be passed to the Town Clerk or in his/her absence the Deputy Town Clerk for immediate attention.
- If the complaint is not written a note of the conversation should be made as soon as possible and forwarded to the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk for immediate attention.
- If the complaint is of such a nature as to require the attendance of the emergency services, the recipient should contact the appropriate service without delay and notify the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk as soon as possible.

Office records

- The Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk will keep a basic record of the complaint in the Complaints Register. The Complaints Register will be available for examination during office hours.
- The Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk will inform the responsible person who should deal with the complaint and a note kept of any action in the register.
- Where the complaint relates to a service provided by another agency (such as footpath maintenance) then the appropriate documentation will be completed and forwarded without undue delay. Where this may be urgent the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk will telephone or e-mail the service provider as soon as possible and forward written confirmation afterwards.
- The complaint will be notified to the Chairman.

Complaints that may result in litigation

Where a complaint is made that might involve the Council or the Council employee in litigation, then a full written report should be made for the use of the Council, its lawyers and the insurance company. The written report should be completed as soon as possible after the event and include the fullest facts and observations which the writer noticed at the time. The report should be sent to the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk without any delay.

Results of Complaints

- The Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk will acknowledge the complaint within 7 working days and any action carried out or planned by the Town Council within 21 working days.
- The Chairman will regularly review the Complaints Register.

2: Complaint against Council Staff

- The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures, administration, staff or Councillors in writing.
- If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Town Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
- The Town Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee established for the purpose of hearing such complaints.
- The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish.
- Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any document or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting

- The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council Meeting in public.
- Chairman to introduce everyone.
- Chairman to explain procedure.
- Complainant or representative to outline the complaint.
- Members to question the complainant.
- If relevant, the Town Clerk or other Proper Person to explain the Council's position.
- Members to ask question of the Town Clerk or other Proper Person.
- Complainant and Town Clerk or other Proper Person allowed to have a last word.
- Town Clerk or other Proper Person and the complainant to be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (Clarification by all parties may be necessary – hence both parties may return to the meeting when requested)
- All parties return to hear decision or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the meeting

- Decision to be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

3: Complaints against Councillors

Matter for the Standards Board

Any complaint against a Councillor's activity covered by the Standards Board Model Code of Conduct will automatically be reported to the Standards Board. The details will be forward via the Town Clerk.