

Frome Town Council Constitution

Chapter 10 Complaints Procedure

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A copy of this document is also available in different formats such as large print, audio or in a different language, please contact us if we can help you.

Frome Town Council aims to provide you with the best possible service and if you're not happy about it, we'd like to hear from you. It's usually better to approach a Councillor or member of staff informally and try to resolve the situation. If that isn't possible or if that approach hasn't worked for you, you should follow this complaints procedure.

1. We take all complaints seriously and do our best to learn from them. We will investigate complaints in a fair and confidential way. Making a complaint about us does not mean you will be treated differently to any other resident in the future. You will be treated politely and with respect.
2. This complaints procedure applies to complaints about the services we provide, our administration and procedures, including complaints about our staff.
3. This complaints procedure does not apply to complaints:
 - by one council employee against another council employee or by a council employee against the council as their employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures, which can be found in [Chapter 4](#) of our constitution called Staff Handbook.
 - against Cllrs. These types of complaint refer to a breach of the Cllrs Code of Conduct, which can be found in [Chapter 9](#) of our constitution. If this is the case, you should contact the district Monitoring Officer who is based at Mendip District Council offices in Shepton Mallet. (From 1 April 2023 the responsibilities of Mendip District Council will be transferred to Somerset Council).

If you would like to talk informally and confidentially about a possible breach of the Cllrs Code of Conduct, you should contact the Town Clerk who will be able to advise you.

4. The best 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 contacting the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed or by simply coming to the meeting in person. There is always an opportunity to raise your concerns in Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council.
5. However, if your complaint is about our procedures or administration we have a three stage process. The process has been designed to ensure your complaint is dealt with as efficiently and satisfactorily as possible.
6. Please email us, call us or write to us at the details on the front page of this document and mark your complaint *confidential for the Town Clerk* or *confidential for the Leader of the Council*. It will be helpful to let us know the nature of the complaint (i.e. service delivery, council decision etc.), whether it is about a member of staff and their name, details of the complaint and what would you like done about your complaint. You can remain anonymous, but we will be unable to contact you if you do. Otherwise please let

us know how you'd like to be contacted.

7. The three stage process is outlined below:

Stage 1

- Your complaint will initially be dealt with by the Town Clerk who will acknowledge your complaint within two working days. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing. The addresses and numbers are set out below.
- The Town Clerk will investigate each complaint and may ask for further information as necessary from you and/or from Cllrs or staff.
- The Town Clerk will try to resolve your complaint within five working days.
- If this is not possible, the Town Clerk will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and provide an estimate how long the investigation is likely to last.

Stage 2

- If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Town Clerk or if your complaint concerns the Town Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Leader of the Council.
- The Leader of the Council will investigate each complaint and may ask for further information as necessary from you and/or from Cllrs or staff.
- The Leader of the Council will try to resolve your complaint within five working days.
- If this is not possible, the Leader will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days and estimate how long the investigation is likely to last.

Stage 3

- If you still remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask the Leader of the Council to refer it to the Council.
- Your complaint will be considered by Cllrs in a confidential session at the next Council meeting. You will be invited to attend this meeting and you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your complaint after the meeting.

Taking things further

We hope that we are able to satisfactorily resolve your complaint. However, if you are unhappy with the action we have taken you can contact the following organisations for advice:

The Monitoring Officer, Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT or mendip.gov.uk or call 0300 303 8588 (From 1 April 2023 the responsibilities of Mendip District Council be transferred to Somerset Council)

For complaints that were related to financial matters where you think we have acted illegally or improperly please contact our External Auditor: PKF Littlejohn, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4HD or www.pkf-l.com or call 020 7516 2200

For complaints about information you have requested under the Freedom of Information Act

200 or Data Protection Act 2018 or about how we manage your information please contact the Information Commissioner at ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint or call 0303 1231113