

LLANWARNE AND DISTRICT GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Llanwarne and District Group Parish Council is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman and has adopted this policy to provide clarity for ensuring complaints are properly and fully considered.
- 1.2 The Parish Council does not consider formal complaints against its member councillors. These are dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's adopted Code of Conduct by the Monitoring Officer based at Herefordshire Council.
- 1.3 All other complaints relating to parish council decisions or actions should be addressed to the Parish Clerk who will acknowledge receipt and will deal with the matter promptly. The Parish Council aims to resolve complaints within 12 weeks from receipt where possible.
- 1.4 Should the complaint relate to the Parish Clerk, then it should be addressed to the Parish Council Chairman.
- 1.5 A fair and courteous response will be given in all cases, and if necessary, a full and proper investigation may be undertaken to establish all the pertinent facts.
- 1.6 All communications will be handled in compliance with the Parish Council's policies relating to GDPR and privacy.

INFORMAL COMPLAINT

- 2.1 The Parish Council will seek to resolve all complaints informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.
- 2.2 An informal complaint may be made by phone or by email and addressed to the Parish Clerk who will liaise with the complainant and relevant members/officers to seek resolution.
- 2.3 Should it not be possible to resolve a complaint informally the complainant may escalate the complaint to a formal complaint.
- 2.4 The complaint shall be escalated to a formal complaint if, in the opinion of the Parish Clerk or Parish Chairman, the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant such measures.
- 2.5 There is no defined process for an informal complaint; but full records must be kept of any communications and attempts at resolution.

2. FORMAL COMPLAINTS – GENERAL PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Where possible, the Parish Council would wish to solve any complaint informally prior to a formal complaint being lodged.
- 3.2 All formal complaints must be made in writing to the Clerk (either as a letter posted to the parish council's address, or by email) except in the case of 5.3 below 'Complaints against the Clerk'. The postal address is: Llanwarne and District Group Parish Council, 1 Redbrook Close, Hereford, HR2 6RB and the email address is: clerk@llanwarnegroup-pc.gov.uk
- 3.3 The complainant must indicate whether the complaint is to remain confidential or not.
- 3.4. The receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by the Parish Council Clerk within 5 working days along with a confirmation of the next steps and suggested timeframe.
- 3.5 Arrangements will be made by the Clerk to investigate the facts and collate any evidence. The complainant may be asked for more information, to attend a meeting or to present their complaint to the Parish Council.
- 3.6 The complainant will be advised of any decision and whether their complaint is upheld along with reasons within 12 weeks wherever possible

3. FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS

- 4.1 The Parish Council does not consider formal complaints about its members.
- 4.2 To progress a formal complaint about a member of Llanwarne and District Group Parish Council, the Monitoring Officer at Herefordshire Council must be contacted. Herefordshire Council as its own policies for dealing with such complaints.
- 4.3 The contact details for the Monitoring Officer are:
Monitoring Officer, Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane, PO Box 4, Hereford, HR4 0XH.

4. FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT OFFICERS/EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 Formal complaints about an employee of the Parish Council must be made in writing to the Parish Clerk; setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.
- 5.2 Complaints will be referred to the appropriate Line Manager and be processed in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary procedure.
- 5.3 Complaints about the Parish Clerk must be made in writing to the Parish Council Chairman, setting out the reasons for the complaint and providing any supplementary information that will assist an investigation.

5. FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES OR DECISIONS

- 6.1 Complaints about a decision, the general operations of the Council or the Council as a body should be made to the Parish Clerk in writing, providing any additional information that will enable the complaint to be investigated.
- 6.2 The complaint shall first be considered by the Parish Clerk, working with the Parish Council Chairman who shall seek to resolve the issue or explain the background to the decision. The complainant may be invited to a meeting with the Parish Clerk and/or the Chairman to seek a resolution
- 6.3 Should it not be possible to resolve the complaint, it shall be referred to the Parish Council. The complainant may be invited to address the Parish Council to outline the background to the complaint.
- 6.4 Records shall be kept detailing all complaints, actions undertaken and the outcome.
- 6.5 If a complaint relates to alleged criminal activity by the Council, then the complaint should be directed to the police.
- 6.6 If a complaint relates to alleged financial irregularity, then local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts.

6. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 A vexatious complainant is one who persists unreasonably with their complaints or makes complaints in order to inconvenience the Council rather than genuinely resolve an issue. This may include making serial complaints about different issues or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly.
- 7.2 If such complaints affect the Council's ability to undertake its work and provide its services to others, it may alter the way it deals with complaints by not acknowledging or responding to vexatious complaints. Complaints will still be read in case they contain new information.

- 7.3 If a complainant is to be classified as vexatious, they shall be informed so and given a timescale of how long this will remain the case.
- 7.4 Should a vexatious complainant make a new complaint about new issues these will be treated on their merits.

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Review Date – August 2027 or when legislation changes, whichever is sooner.