



# New Alresford Town Council

Alresford Recreation Centre, The Avenue, Alresford, Hants, SO24 9EP

Tel: 01962 732079. Email: [townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.newalresford-tc.gov.uk](http://www.newalresford-tc.gov.uk)

## Complaints Policy

### Table of Contents

1	Introduction
2	Scope of Policy
3	Who can complain
4	How to complain
5	How the Council will deal with your complaint
6	Habitual and Vexatious Complaints
7	Town Council Staff

Version	Date Approved	Minute Ref	Next Review
V1	16/07/2024	24/051	

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process by which the council handles routine complaints anyone may have about the service received from the council and how the council will aim to resolve those concerns.

## 2. Scope of Policy

The policy applies to complaints relating to the administration and procedural affairs of the council. The policy does not deal with grievance issues from staff nor with any matters relating to third parties that do not relate to action taken by the council.

This policy does not apply in the following circumstances:

<b>Alleged financial irregularity</b>	Local electors have a statutory right to object to a council's audit of accounts ( <a href="#">Audit Commission Act 1998, s.16</a> ).  Detailed information about your rights can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Alleged criminal activity</b>	Should you suspect criminal activity; this should be reported to the police for investigation.
<b>Alleged breach of the code of conduct adopted by the council</b>	These types of complaints relate to councillors only and not members of staff. All complaints of this nature should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Winchester City Council. A copy of the council's code of conduct is available from the clerk by sending an email to: <a href="mailto:townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk">townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk</a>

## Personal injury, damage to property, financial loss or legal claims

Complaints concerning personal injury, damage to property, financial loss or a legal claim will be immediately referred to the council's insurance providers for investigation and resolution.

## 3. Who can complain

Anyone who lives in or near New Alresford who is affected by decisions made by the council has a right to complain.

## 4. How to complain

### *Informal complaint*

An informal complaint can be made to the Town Clerk by telephone, email or in person. The complaint will be dealt with by the most appropriate person depending on the nature of the complaint.

We hope that most complaints can be dealt with informally. However, we appreciate that at times an informal complaint might not result in a satisfactory response, or the complaint might be so serious that a formal complaint is more appropriate.

### ***Formal complaint***

The council requests that any formal complaints are directed to the Town Clerk in writing giving full details of the complaint and marked 'Confidential – Formal complaint'. If possible, the complaint should include details of any dates/times, references to council minutes, details of staff or councillors concerned, copies of any correspondence and your contact details. If the complaint is about the Town Clerk, then you should direct your complaint to the Chair of Town Council.

All complaints should be sent to: [townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@newalresford-tc.gov.uk)

The receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days along with the names of those who will be investigating your complaint.

### **5. How the council will deal with your complaint**

All formal complaints will be fully investigated within four weeks with a written response then being sent.

If the complaint is particularly complicated or there is insufficient time to gather information needed, then the council reserves the right to extend the four week period but will notify you of this in writing. We will also contact you during this period should we require more information from you. However, the agreed period will be extended should we then require a longer period to investigate any new information provided by you.

You may be invited to attend a meeting when the complaint is being considered. You are welcome to bring a representative with you should you wish. Should you require any assistance, please contact the Town Clerk in the first instance.

In all cases, the council will endeavour to resolve all formal complaints as quickly as possible.

The Town Clerk will lead the investigation into the complaint along with two named councillors appointed by the Chairman of the council. In the case that the complaint is about the Town Clerk, three named Councillors will be appointed to investigate.

In all cases, the council will treat your complaint in confidence and adhere to current Data Protection Regulations so your identity will not be disclosed unless you choose to waive your right to anonymity.

In no circumstances will the Council acknowledge or consider informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.

Once the investigation is complete, we will write to you to advise whether your complaint has been upheld or dismissed. We will give you reasons for our decision along with details of any action the council will take. We will also outline the appeals procedure to you.

### ***What happens next?***

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should put your concerns in writing to the council and it will be considered by three councillors ("the appeals panel") who were not involved in the original complaint investigation. The Town Clerk may be asked to investigate if appropriate.

The appeals panel will look at all the information relating to your complaint and may contact you for further information or invite you to attend a meeting for further discussion. You are welcome to bring a representative with you should you wish.

The appeal panel will notify you of its' decision within three weeks.

The decision of the appeals panel is final.

#### **6. Habitual and Vexatious Complaints**

The Town Council will endeavour to deal with complaints in an efficient, equitable and effective manner. The Council may have to initiate further action, if a complainant behaves in a manner as outlined within the Town Council's Vexatious Policy.

#### **7. Town Council Staff**

A formal complaint is a serious matter. A complaint involving a member of the Council's staff could result in disciplinary action or in cases of gross misconduct, dismissal from the Council's employment.

The Council will not, under any circumstances, enter into any correspondence or discussion with any complainant about any action taken, formally or informally, against any member of its staff. This is expressly to protect the employment rights to which all employees of the Council are entitled.