

Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council

Complaints Policy (updated May 2022)



Our Commitment to You

The Town Council intends to provide good local services and first class information on other services in the area. (The Town Council Help Centre (located at Council Offices, 1 Moorland Parade, 01202 632070) is open Monday to Wednesday 9.30 am to 13.00 pm to assist with general day-to day issues. However, if you have a concern about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff or Councillors the following complaints procedure has been designed to deal with your concerns quickly and fairly. All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner.

The aim of the complaints procedure is to swiftly investigate all complaints in an impartial manner and to find a solution locally, whenever possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Council.

The Council believes that complaints can provide useful information and feedback on the quality of our services, procedures and practices. The effective handling of complaints will help us to improve the services provided on behalf of residents, visitors and those working within the Town.

How can you complain?

Complaints about an individual council employee -

In writing, in person, via email, website or by telephone to:

Town Clerk
Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council
1 Moorland Parade, Moorland Way
Upton, Dorset

BH16 5JS
T: 01202 632070
E: office@lytchettminsterandupton-tc.gov.uk
W: www.lytchettminsteranduptontowncouncil.co.uk

- Or, if your complaint is about the Clerk, please address to 'Town Mayor'.

Complaints about the council service, administration or procedures -

In writing, in person, via email, website or by telephone to:

Town Clerk
Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council
1 Moorland Parade, Moorland Way
Upton, Dorset
BH16 5JS
T: 01202 632070
E: office@lytchettminsterandupton-tc.gov.uk
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Such complaints will be handled under the Council's complaints procedure

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL EMPLOYEES, COUNCIL SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION OR PROCEDURES OF LYTCHETT MINSTER AND UPTON TOWN COUNCIL

In many cases, it will be possible for an issue to be dealt with straight away and the source of the complaint resolved immediately.

For more complex issues, it is much better to put these in writing so that a thorough investigation can be undertaken. Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Complaints should be made within eight weeks of the incident, or within eight weeks of the last instance for an ongoing complaint. IN exceptional circumstances the Council may investigate complaints notified outside of eight weeks. The exceptional circumstances should be clearly stated in the complaint.

The Town Council will:

- deal with your complaint in an understanding and sympathetic way;
- acknowledge receipt of your complaint with 5 working days and let you know the name of the person dealing with your complaint;
- respond to all complaints within 15 working days.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY COMPLAINT?

STAGE 1 The Town Clerk will consider your complaint and hopefully it will be resolved to your satisfaction, either by immediate action or a course of action agreeable to you. If you feel that the complaint cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, you can ask the Town Clerk to refer the matter to the Council's complaints sub committee.

STAGE 2 The Council's Complaints sub-committee comprises of four town councillors. Your complaint will be considered and investigated by the sub-committee. This may involve reviewing of the files and correspondence and undertaking interviews as necessary. Once satisfied that a full investigation has taken place, the sub-committee will write to you to inform you of the outcome of its findings and action proposed as a result.

The sub-committee shall be comprised of:

The Mayor or Deputy Mayor
A representative from each of the three Committees

It should be noted that aside from the Mayor/Deputy Mayor, members of the Complaints Sub-Committee will be changed for each complaint, and will depend on various circumstances of the individuals such as availability etc. Any Councillor having a pre-disposed interest in or a relationship with the complainant outside of councillor/resident (e.g. neighbour, family member) shall declare this, and will be excluded from participating in the complaints process on that occasion.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR INDIVIDUAL ELECTED OR CO-OPTED COUNCILLORS OF LYTCHETT MINSTER AND UPTON TOWN COUNCIL

Councillors are required to observe a 'Code of Conduct'. If you think that a unitary, town or parish councillor has not followed the Code, you can complain and Dorset Council will look into the matter.

Dorset Council (DC) has a special committee, called the Audit and Governance (Assessment) Sub Committee, which is responsible for doing this.

If you want to complain about the conduct of a Council Member, please contact:

The Monitoring Officer
Dorset Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1UZ

DC can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Member. It is not allowed to deal with complaints about things that are not covered by the Members' Code of Conduct. If you make a complaint to DC it must be about why you think a Member has not followed the Code of Conduct.

A full copy of the Code of Conduct is available from the Council's offices and on the Council's website.

ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE RELATING TO PROCEDURES OR A COMPLAINT

If you need any specific help or general guidance about the Council's procedures or about any specific complaint, please contact the:

Town Clerk
Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council
1 Moorland Parade, Moorland Way
Upton, Dorset
BH16 5JS
T: 01202 632070
E: office@lytchettminsterandupton-tc.gov.uk
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