

Complaints procedure

For the benefit of good local administration, Swallowfield Parish Council has adopted the following procedure, approved by the Council of National Association of Local Councils, for handling complaints:

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith, the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant indicates that he or she would prefer not to put the complaint to the clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the chairman.
3. On receipt of a written complaint, the clerk or chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant, but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or a councillor without notifying the person complained of and giving him or her an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the clerk or chairman receives written complaint about his or her own actions, he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
4. The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. The clerk or chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the council, and the clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.
6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it, and the nature of any action to be taken, shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.