

SKENFRITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY 25-26 ADOPTED MAY 2025

Skenfrith Community Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or those who are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service received from this council or unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Policy sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

THE PROCEDURE

- This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how the Council has dealt with concerns.
- It does not apply to complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct.
- The appropriate 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 writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary, and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
- You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. This can be done in person, by phone, or by writing to, or emailing the Clerk.
- Wherever possible the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible the Clerk will normally acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
- The Clerk will try to resolve your complaint within a further 10 working days. If the matter cannot be dealt with within these specified timescales there will be an explanation and an indicative time by which a response will be made.
- If your complaint is about the Clerk it should be made directly to the Chair of the Council. The Chair will investigate each complaint, contacting you to obtain further information as necessary as well as obtaining information from members of the Council and seeking advice from Monmouthshire County Council's Monitoring Officer as appropriate.
- The Chair will normally notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result. In exceptional cases the 20 working days timescale may have to be extended, in which case you will be kept fully informed of the reasons for the delay.
- If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for the complaint to be referred to the Chair of the Council for review. When reviewing your complaint, the Chair will convene a Complaints Panel made up of members of the Council.
- When a Complaints Panel is convened, you will be invited to attend, explain the complaint and ask questions. The Clerk will respond and explain the reasons for reaching the decision taken and may also ask additional questions of you. Members of the Complaints Panel may ask questions of both the Clerk and of you, the complainant. Both parties will be asked to withdraw while the Panel makes a decision.

- A decision will be made by the Complaints Panel and the outcome of the review and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint will be notified to you by the Chair of the Council in writing within seven working days.
- Where a complaint is upheld, the Clerk should report, to a subsequent meeting of Council, the action taken to ensure that the same mistake does not recur.
- In the first instance, all complaints should be directed to the Clerk, who is the Council's proper officer.
- There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken. If the Council decides that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, the complainant should be so informed, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.
- Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Clerk, and may be acted on at his/her discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.
- The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary.