



# **WHISTON TOWN COUNCIL**

## **A Guide on How to Make Comments, Complaints and Compliments about Whiston Town Council**

Sandra Mayers  
Town Clerk

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**INTRODUCTION**

## **COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

Whiston Town Council is committed to providing best value and the highest possible level of service to our customers. We would like to know what you think about us.

You can use the attached form to make a comment or a complaint about a service we provide or a particular member of staff.

Alternatively you can contact us by e-mail

[whistontowncouncil@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:whistontowncouncil@tiscali.co.uk) or telephone the Council Offices on 0151 430 7200.

If you send a complaint we will reply and pass on your comments to the member of staff concerned.

## **COMPLAINTS**

We realise of course that we sometimes may get things wrong, and there may be occasions when you are unhappy with the service we provide. If, for example, you feel that:

- The Council has taken too long to take action without good reason
- The Council has not followed its own policy, rules of the law
- The Council has not made the decision in the correct way
- The Council has broken its promise or given the wrong information
- The Council or one of its staff has treated you unfairly or discourteously

then please let us know. We will welcome any complaint as an opportunity to improve our services and, and where possible, we will rectify the situation.

This document tells you how to proceed in such a case.

## **RAISING YOUR COMPLAINT FOR THE FIRST TIME**

If you are dissatisfied in any way with something the Council has done, (or not done), contact the:-

The Town Clerk

Mrs Sandra Mayers, Whiston Town Council Offices, Old Colliery Road, Whiston, L35 3QX

The current Chairman (Town Mayor) of the Town Council

c/o Whiston Town Council

Council Offices

Old Colliery Road

Whiston

Knowsley

L35 3QX

E-mail: [whistontowncouncil@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:whistontowncouncil@tiscali.co.uk)

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

You can make your complaint in one of the following ways:

- By calling at the Town Council Offices
- By telephoning the Town Council Administration Office
- By writing to either the Town Clerk, or the Chairman (Town Mayor) of the Town Council

However, if you want to make a formal complaint, you will have to complete a form. If you require assistance in completing the form, a member of staff will be willing to help.

**Please note that the Town Council does not accept anonymous complaints.**

**MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

## **Stage One**

If a formal complaint is received, the Town Clerk will attempt to resolve the complaint at this stage.

If the complaint is about either the Town Clerk or a Member of Whiston Town Council Staff then the Town Mayor will attempt to deal with the complaint.

To make a formal complaint, please complete the attached form to this document, and return it to either the Town Clerk or the Chairman (Town Mayor) of the Town Council. An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and a full response within 10 working days. If more time is required in order to produce a reply, a letter will be sent giving the reason for the delay, and a date by which time you can expect the matter to be resolved.

## **Stage Two**

If, at the end of Stage One investigations into your complaint, you are still not satisfied with response, you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further by another two Members of the Council.

Once again, an acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and a full response within 10 working days. If more time is required in order to produce a reply, a letter will be sent giving the reason for the delay, and a date by which time you can expect the matter to be resolved.

## **Stage Three**

If, at the end of Stage Two investigations into your complaint, you are still not satisfied you may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by an appointed Committee of the Council.

This is the final stage of the Council's complaints procedure. A meeting of this Committee will normally be convened within four weeks. A full report will be presented to the Committee, and you will be invited to attend. If you prefer, you can be accompanied by a representative or a friend to help you put your case forward.

We will write to you to inform you of the Committee's decision within one week of the meeting this decision will be the final decision.

# WHISTON TOWN COUNCIL

## Comments, Complaints and Compliments about the Town Council

Your Name (Capital letters please)

.....

Your Address

.....

.....

Postcode .....

Your Telephone Number Home .....

Work .....

This is a            **Comment**            **Complaint**            **Compliment**

(please circle the appropriate category)

Please give details

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**If it is a complaint, what would you like the Town Council to do to remedy this situation?**

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.....

**Have you already contacted the Town Council about this matter?**

**YES / NO** (Please delete as necessary)

**If the answer is “YES”, who dealt with this matter?**

.....

**Your Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Please return this form to:**

**S Mayers  
Town Clerk  
Whiston Town Council  
Whiston Town Hall  
Old Colliery Road  
Whiston  
Knowsley  
L35 3QX**

## **A Guide for Handling Complaints**

This note sets out the statutory and recommended procedures to be used when there is a complaint made about a local Council.

This document is intended to assist local Councils to deal with complaints they receive.

1. It will not be appropriate for a local Council to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. Councils should consider engaging other bodies in respect of the following types of complaints
  - (a) Financial Irregularity – Local elector’s statutory right to object Council’s audit of accounts (Section 16 Audit Commission Act 1998).  
On other matters Councils may need to consult their auditor or the Audit Commission
  - (b) Criminal Activity – The Police
  - (c) Members Conduct – Failure to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct – The Principle Authority for the area
  - (d) Employee Conduct – There is no statutory scheme for complaints about Town Council employees, any such complaint that requires action should be dealt with through the internal disciplinary process
2. One of the first tasks is that a Council should determine exactly what a complaint is

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council’s action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council”

A good complaints system is

- well publicised and easy to use
- helpful and receptive
- not adversarial
- fair and objective
- based on clear procedures and defined responsibilities
- quick, thorough, rigorous and consistent
- decisive and capable of putting things right where necessary
- sensitive to the special needs and circumstances of the complaint
- adequately resourced
- fully supported by Councillors and Officers
- regularly analysed to spot pattern of complaints and lessons for service improvement

3. Most organisations have a 3 stage complaint procedure whereby issues are resolved by:

- Front line staff, then
- Management, and then
- Senior Management/Members

4. It is good practice to set deadlines for complaints handling and Councils should not leave this open ended. Clearly, some flexibility is required to deal with lengthier and more complex complaints and this should be reflected clearly within a complaints procedure.

5. Complaints which cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk (or nominated office), should be dealt with by an appointed committee which reduces the process and makes it less daunting for the complainant should they wish to attend a meeting in person.

6. At all times, the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.