

## **Talgarth Town Council Complaints Policy**

Talgarth Town Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have concerning the Council. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. If we got something wrong, we'll apologise and where possible we'll try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

### **When to use this policy**

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us such as highway matters and final planning permission and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known to the correct body.

Also, this policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In these circumstances, you should reference the appropriate Policy and contact the Town Clerk in the first instance.

### **Have you asked us yet?**

If you are approaching us regarding a complaint or concern for the first time, then this policy doesn't apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your complaint or concern. If you are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your complaint or concern known as we describe below.

### **Informal resolution**

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you're dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of the council will draw them to our attention. If the member of the council can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

### **How to express concern or complain formally**

You can express your concern in any of the ways below:-

- You can ask for a copy of our complaints form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- You can get in touch with the Town Clerk on tel 01874 711565 if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- You can use the form on our website at [www.talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk)
- You can e-mail us at [clerk@talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk)
- You can write a letter to us at the following address:

Clerk of the Council  
“Ty-Carreg”, Bronllys Road,  
Talgarth,  
Brecon, LD3 0HH.

## **Dealing with your concern**

- We will formally acknowledge your concern within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
- We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it's better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. (In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.).

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## **What if there is more than one body involved?**

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf e.g. repair contractors, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

## **Investigation**

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. In the majority of cases we will ask somebody from the Town Council to look into it and get back to you. We will ask you to confirm that the person appointed is acceptable to you. In the unlikely event it is not possible to agree on an appointment, we may at our discretion use someone from elsewhere.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right. We'll also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a response or information and we will see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the response or information rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 10 working days. If your complaint is more complex, we will:

- Let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- Tell you how long we expect it to take.
- Let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

## **Further steps**

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or
- have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

Phone: 0300 790 0203 e-mail: [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk) the website: [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk) writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

[www.talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk)

Reviewed and approved at the meeting of Talgarth Town Council on 12 April 2023

Signed by Chairperson.....