

Penmaenmawr Town Council



Complaints' Policy and Procedures Complaints' Policy

Penmaenmawr Town Council is committed to providing high quality, accessible and responsive services to everyone who lives, works or visits the town and to serve them as effectively and courteously as possible. One of the ways in which the council can continue to improve its services is by listening and responding positively to any comments or complaints that it may receive and by putting right mistakes.

The Council has adopted a standard procedure to provide a transparent, fair and confidential process for dealing with complaints made about the administration of the council, its procedures and councillors conduct. Which will ensure that any complaint is properly and fully considered.

Aim

The Council aims to ensure that:

1. Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
2. A complaint is taken as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with its service which calls for an immediate response;
3. A complaint is dealt with promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
4. It responds in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where it has got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.;
5. It learns from complaints, uses them to improve its service, and reviews annually its complaints policy and procedures.
6. Every effort will first be made by the Clerk or Chairman to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant informally, or by providing an explanation, before resorting to the formal complaints procedure.

How to contact Penmaenmawr Town Council

1. There are many ways in which you can contact Penmaenmawr Town Council to pass on compliments and comments;
2. You could write to the council; The Town Office and Chamber, Penmaenmawr Community Centre, Conwy Road, Penmaenmawr Conwy LL34 6AB
3. You could email the council using: clerk@penmaenmawr.org
4. You could telephone the council on 01492 623221
5. You could visit the council offices at the community Centre – the Town Council offices are located at the back of the centre.
6. You could contact your local councillor – full contact details are available on the website; www.penmaenmawr.org

A 'Complaints Log' will be produced and kept by the Town Clerk and regularly updated and made available to the Council when it reviews complaints. The log should record:

1. The date the complaint was made;
2. Details of the complainant/s and complaint/s being made; Policy – Compliments, Comments and Complaints
3. How the complaint was made, e.g. in person, letter, email;
4. When the complaint/s were responded to;
5. What action was taken;
6. What further actions may need to be taken

All written complaints, whether via e-mail or letter, should be stored securely in the main Town Council offices in a designated Complaints Folder that is kept in a locked filing cabinet. Any follow-up correspondence should be filed with the original complaint.

The complaints procedure will not apply:-

To complaints about a member of the Town Council's staff - these will be dealt with internally as an employment matter and appropriate action taken as required.

Where someone feels very strongly that a decision of the Council was unlawful, they may apply to the courts for a judicial review of the Council's decision

To any matter that raises a suspicion of criminal wrongdoing may be referred to the police.

Where the Council carries out functions on behalf of another authority, under an agency agreement with the County Council, the complaint may be referred to them. In such a situation, the Ombudsman may be involved if the matter is not resolved by the principal authority.

Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council

Unreasonable and Vexations Complaints

There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when there clearly is no reasonable basis to do so, 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. The Council may decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be dismissed at the discretion of the council according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.

Informal Complaint (Stage 1)

A complaint should be made, either orally or in writing, to the Clerk or the Chairman who will investigate the complaint and report back to the complainant. in writing

Complaints Panel (Stage 2)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they will be advised in writing of their right to have the complaint referred to a complaints panel consisting of three town councillors.

Complaint Review of Investigation and (Stage 3)

If the issue remains unresolved, the complainant will be notified of his or her right to have the matter referred to a meeting of the Town Council. The outcome of all formal complaints dealt with by Council will be announced in public at the following Town Council Meeting.

At the Meeting (Stage 3)

1. The town council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press (an exempt meeting). Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the town council meeting in public.
2. The chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
3. The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline grounds for complaint and then questions may be asked by (i) the clerk and then members.
4. The clerk shall be given the opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may then be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.
5. The clerk and then complainant shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The clerk and complainant to be asked to leave room while members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.
7. The clerk and the complainant shall be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be formalised on that day, they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when they are likely to be informed of it. After the meeting
8. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.