

DILWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

It is always to be hoped that complaints about Council procedures or actions will be few and far between. However, should a complaint be thought to be necessary, there is a definite procedure that must be followed. This is set out in a document published by the National Audit Office that can be seen on the Dilwyn Parish Council website. To help in understanding a very lengthy document, a summary of the most salient points follows this piece.

Sadly, over the last six years, Dilwyn Parish Council has suffered from a number of complaints, at the rate one per year. The only one of these that proved to be justified was, subsequently, properly dealt with by the Council. Although the other complaints were deemed to be unwarranted, they nevertheless necessitated payments of more than £8000 in additional external auditor's fees, all of which comes from the precept - effectively out of the pockets of every householder!

Any parishioner has, of course, the right to complain, should there be something of concern, and the Parish Council would most certainly want to respond to any such. However, there must be a proper procedure and this, to be helpful, is laid out in the aforementioned NAO document. Unfortunately, the recent Dilwyn complainants have not followed this procedure and have gone directly to the external auditor; the matter will, of course, be investigated, but at a cost - hence the £8000+! (A figure that can be checked by reference to the Council website.)

It can clearly be seen, therefore, how undesirable and, indeed, incorrect it is to lodge a complaint with an external auditor in the first instance. **Rather, should there be a complaint on any matter that might come within the jurisdiction of the Parish Council, the FIRST CONTACT SHOULD ALWAYS BE WITH THE PARISH CLERK, GWILYM RIPPON (Contact details below).** The matter would most certainly be dealt with promptly and efficiently. Should the complainant then not be satisfied with the outcome, that is the time to go elsewhere, but not before.

IT IS VERY MUCH TO BE HOPED THAT, WHEN NECESSARY, THIS SIMPLE PROCEDURE WILL ALWAYS BE FOLLOWED BY EVERYONE.

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