Complaints Procedure

1. This is the complaints procedure of Towcester Town Council, hereinafter referred to as “the council”.

2. The council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the council, this complaints procedure sets out how you can complain to the council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

3. This complaints procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

4. This complaints procedure does not apply to:

   4.1. Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council’s disciplinary and grievance procedures.

   4.2. Complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are made under the Code of Conduct which can be found on the Council’s website.

5. The appropriate time for influencing council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the council debates and votes on a matter. You can do this by writing to the clerk 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 can 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 and the special process set out in Standing Orders is followed.

6. You can make your complaint about the council’s procedures or administration to the clerk to the council. You must do this in writing and a form is provided below.

Please return the form by e-mail if possible. The council's contact details are set out below.

7. If your complaint is about the actions of the clerk, you can make it directly to the chair of the council instead.

8. You should indicate in your complaint if you wish your complaint to be treated confidentially, such that your name and contact details would only be known to the clerk, or the chair of the council as appropriate. Requests for confidentiality will not automatically be granted. The assessment of a request for confidentiality will be considered against the following criteria – but with the balance always being in favour of disclosure unless exceptional circumstances exist to determine otherwise:

    8.1. The complainant has reasonable grounds for believing that they will be at risk of physical or other serious harm if their identity is disclosed.

    8.2. Any other special circumstances put forward by the complainant which identify reasonable grounds for believing that disclosure of details would result in the complaint or witnesses being intimidated or lead to evidence being compromised or destroyed or some other reasons justifying the grant of confidentiality.

    If your request for confidentiality is not granted, you will be asked whether you wish the Council to continue to consider your complaint.

9. Wherever possible, the clerk, or chair of the council, as appropriate, will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, they will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within seven calendar days.

10. The clerk, or chair of the council, as appropriate, will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the council. You may be invited to a meeting to make verbal representations and may bring someone with you when doing so.

11. The clerk or the chair will notify you within 21 calendar days of the outcome of your complaint and what action (if any) the council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed).

12. If your complaint has been investigated by the clerk and you are dissatisfied with the response, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed by the Council you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

13. If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your complaint you may seek judicial review through the High Court (see https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/you-and-the-judiciary/judicial-review/ for details).

14. Please note that the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) does not extend to town/parish councils.

Contact details for complaints handling:

Town Clerk:	clerk@towcester-tc.gov.uk
Tel:	01327 350995
Chair of Council:	Towcester Town Mayor *

Council's correspondence address:

Towcester Town Hall
86 Watling Street East
Towcester
NN12 6BS

* *A new chair is elected at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council each May. Details can be found on the Town Council's website, and this policy will be updated accordingly.*

Complaints Form

Date of Complaint:	
Your name:	
Your telephone number(s):	
Your email address:	
Your postal address:	
Do you wish your complaint to be treated confidentially?	
What your complaint is about (please provide as much detail as you can, and attach any supporting evidence or information):	
What harm, disadvantage, or loss have you suffered?	
What remedial action would you like the council to take?	
Any other comments:	