

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Authority's Complaints procedure is contained in its publication "Service Standards –comments and complaints". This is available both in hard copy and electronically. Authority was delegated in January 2007 to the Standards Committee to Monitor the Authority's Complaints Procedure, and it was last considered by this Committee in October 2007. The booklet is periodically updated to reflecting the changing legislative and ethical environment and the policies, practices, procedures and membership of the Authority, the last such change being in July 2013.

The procedure enables members of the public to make complaints about the Authority.

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales has a 12 month time limit for looking into complaints¹. This is in contrast to the PCNPA which has no expressed time limit. I recommend the Authority follow the PSOW in this regard and impose a time limit for complaints lodged after the 1st November 2013.

I recommend the Authority adopts this practice and amends its complaints booklet to reflect this. There should be an exception, however in relation to any complaint or allegation of breach of its financial policies. These are published under the link [http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/files/files/Committees_Members/Anti%20Fraud_Corruption%20\(Gifts_Hospitality\)%202009.doc](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/files/files/Committees_Members/Anti%20Fraud_Corruption%20(Gifts_Hospitality)%202009.doc)

The principal reason I recommend that "stale" i.e. over 12 months old complaints not be considered by the Authority except in exceptional cases, is that it can be difficult to investigate fairly these complaints to both complainant and complainee. For example, records may get destroyed routinely or accidentally, staff change and leave the Authority and its jurisdiction, locations and properties may themselves undergo development and amendments making them different in use, style, structure etc. The Authority's own policies and plans periodically change from time to time. In short the longer the delay, the less satisfactory the quality of the evidence available becomes when an investigation is commenced.

Recommendation

That the Authority's Service standards booklet be amended to adopt a rule that complaints made after the expiry of 12 months immediately proceeding the lodging of the complaint be not investigated save in the case of financial impropriety as set out in the Authority's anti-corruption, Gifts and Hospitality policy or in case of exceptional circumstances.

¹ "Guide to Making a Complaint relating to a Public Body" page4

Please indicate what the National Park could do to remedy the problem or issue:

Service Standards

comments & complaints

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel No:

Return to:

Customer Service Standards
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
FREEPOST HV77
Pembroke Dock
SA72 6YZ

FOR INTERNAL USE

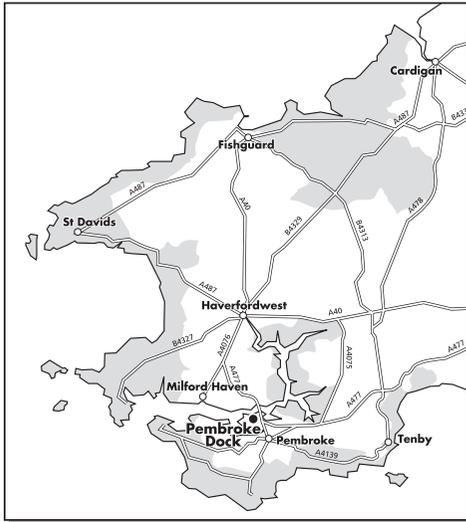
Date and Time Received:

Responsible Officer:

Date Acknowledged:

Action by:





Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

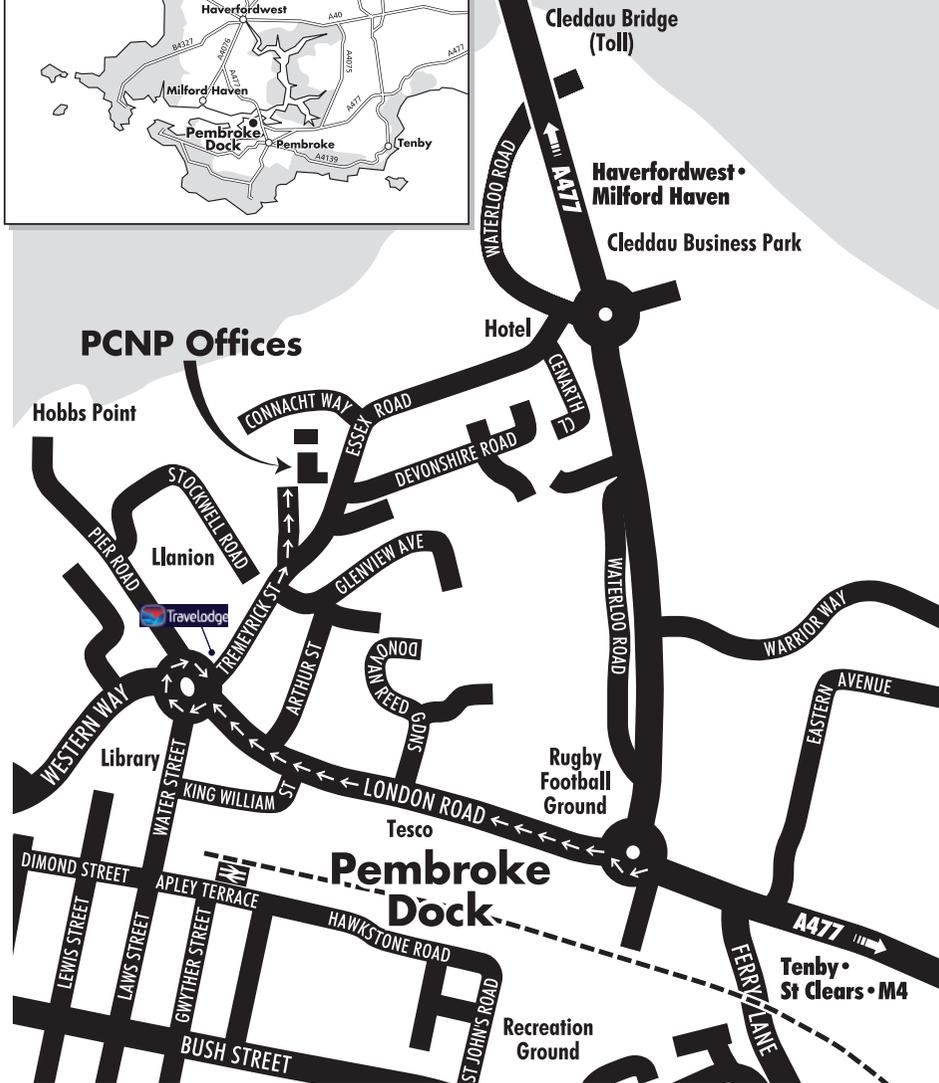
Llanion Park
 Pembroke Dock
 Pembrokeshire
 SA72 6DY
 Tel: 0845 345 7275
 Fax: 01646 689076
 pcnp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
 www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Comments/Complaint Form



Please provide details of your complaint or concern



National Park Authority Members

County Council Representatives

Cllr Paul HARRIES 01239 820809	Gwalia, East Street, Newport, SA42 0SY paulh@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Stanley T HUDSON 01646 693286	The White House, 13 Mount Pleasant Way, Milford Haven, SA73 1AA stanleyh@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Mike JAMES 01239614020	Bronllwyn, 7 Grove Terrace, St Dogmaels, SA43 3ER mikeja@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Owen JAMES 01348 891664	Ffynnon Druidion, Goodwick, SA64 0LD owenj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Lyn JENKINS 01437 721697	31 Bryn Seion, Solva, Haverfordwest, SA62 6TP lynj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Bob KILMISTER 01348 875566	Fagwyr Einon, Llanychaer, Fishguard, SA65 9SP bobk@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Alison LEE 01646 681564	2 Meyrick Street, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6UT alison@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Robert M LEWIS 01834 891214	Stanley Villa, Landshipping, Narberth, SA67 8BE robertl@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Peter MORGAN 01437 781010	The Post Office, 2 St Brides Road, Little Haven, Haverfordwest, SA62 3UN peterm@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Reg OWENS 01646 692203	Herbrandston Post Office, Herbrandston, Milford Haven, SA73 3SJ rego@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr David WM REES 01348 831293	Trefochlyd, Solva, Haverfordwest, SA62 6XY davidr@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Cllr Michael WILLIAMS 01834 844598	4 Harding Street, Tenby, SA70 7LW michaelw@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk
Assembly Appointees	
Mr Allan G ARCHER 01792 207154	6 Admiral's Walk, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 8LQ allana@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (30.11.2015)
Mr David ELLIS 01437 760887	Poyston Hall, Rudbaxton, Haverfordwest, SA62 4DD davide@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (31.01.2014)
Ms Chris GWYTHYR 01646 685073	73 High Street, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6PB christineg@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (01.01.2016)
Mrs Gwyneth HAYWARD 01239 820654	Berry Hill House, Newport, SA42 0NW gwynethh@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (01.02.2014)
Mr Ted SANGSTER 01437 741771	1 The Close, Spittal, Haverfordwest, SA62 5QH teds@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (31.03.2014)
Mrs Melinda THOMAS 01446 781696	c/o PCNPA, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY melindat@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk (30.11.2015)

Our Service Commitment

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is committed to providing a high standard of service to all its customers - but we want to know when things go wrong.

We can learn from your experience - if you think that we have failed to do something or that we have done something badly, or you have a suggestion for improving services then it's important that you tell us about it.

We want you to feel free to contact us with any comments or suggestions. By doing this you will enable us to put things right and improve the service.

This does not affect the statutory rights whereby an applicant for planning approval can ask the National Assembly to consider their case if they think we have made the wrong decision or we have not given a decision within an 8 week period.

Service Standards

Our staff are committed to giving you a high standard of service. They will deal with your enquiries politely and quickly and they will meet the standards set out in our Statement of Service Standards which is available in Information Centres or the National Park Office, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire. Tel. 0845 345 7275.

Definition of Dissatisfaction

Anyone who has had contact with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Authority can express dissatisfaction about the following:-

- the behaviour/actions of members of staff;
- the standard of service provided or the manner in which it was provided;
- lack of appropriate action or failure to deal with the matter quickly enough.

What to do

Contact us either by telephone, by visiting the National Park Office or by writing to us.

Telephoning

You can telephone the National Park's switchboard on 0845 345 7275.

- You can telephone the office of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) by dialling 0845 345 7275.
- If you have already had contact with the service and have ongoing correspondence you can telephone direct, quoting the letter reference.
- If you prefer not to speak to the office, you can telephone the Chairman or any member of the National Park Authority (see list of members on Page 4)
- You can ask a friend, relative or a representative to telephone on your behalf.

Visit the National Park Office

If you prefer you can visit the National Park office or ask a friend, relative or representative to visit us on your behalf in order to make the complaint or suggestion.

The office is located at Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock. If you are unfamiliar with the area the location map inside the front cover will assist you.

Write to the National Park

You can write to us if you prefer by detailing your concerns in a letter or by completing the attached form. **Please remember that we can only deal with complaints that are about our services and/or our employees.**

Please feel free to suggest what we might do to solve the problem, and tell us how we may contact you.

Send your letter to:

The Chief Executive
(National Park Officer),
Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park Authority,
Service Standards,
FREEPOST HV77,
Pembroke Dock
SA72 6YZ

What happens next?

We will acknowledge your communication within three working days and tell you the name and telephone number of the person dealing with it.

This person will contact you if the matter cannot be sorted out within 20 working days and he/she will suggest a course of action for resolving the problem.

What if I feel that the outcome is unsatisfactory?

If you feel that the matter has not been dealt with properly or you are unhappy with the reply, then you can ask the National Park's Monitoring Officer to investigate your case.

The Monitoring Officer is an independent adjudicator. At this stage you will have an opportunity to make any points which you feel have not been properly considered.

The Monitoring Officer will let you have a copy of his Report which will contain details of his decision and any recommendations. In addition the Monitoring Officer periodically informs the Authority/Standards Committee of the existence and nature of his Reports.

If you need help in making your complaint or concerns known to the Authority you can telephone our switchboard operator on 0845 345 7275 who will connect you with a senior officer who will be able to assist you.

Bringing a complaint to the Ombudsman

(i) The law provides that the Ombudsman may investigate a matter once he is satisfied that:-

- (a) the matter has been brought to the attention of the Authority, and

- (b) the Authority has been given a reasonable opportunity to investigate the complaint and respond to it.

These requirements will have been met once you have received a formal response in writing from the Authority in answer to your complaint or the Authority has been given a reasonable time to respond to your complaint but has failed to do so. Your option and right to go direct to the Ombudsman is available as from that stage.

Please note that the Ombudsman has the discretion to investigate a complaint even if these requirements have not been met – if the Ombudsman is satisfied that it would be reasonable for him to do so in the particular circumstances.

- (ii) However, after you have reached the stage of receiving a formal written response from the Authority – the Authority's "Complaints Procedure" allows for further stages to take place in its consideration of your complaint. Such further stages include an investigation by the Monitoring Officer, as detailed in this leaflet.

You may therefore request the Authority to undertake these further stages. In doing so, you do not in any way affect your right of taking your complaint to the Ombudsman if you remain dissatisfied.

- (iii) If you wish to contact the Ombudsman, will you kindly note the following details:-

Ombudsman
Public Services Ombudsman for
Wales
1 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae
Pencoed CF35 5LJ

Email:
ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Telephone enquiry number:
0845 601 0987
(Calls to this number are charged
at local call rate)

Fax Number: 01656 641199

Website address:
www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Please remember our commitment

If you feel we have done something wrong or badly or that there has been a long delay in dealing with any matter, please tell us about it. Only by doing this can we put matters right and acknowledge any mistake on our part. This will also enable us to improve our services for the benefit of everyone.