

Dadlington & Sutton Cheney Parish Council

Complaints policy

Introduction

Dadlington and Sutton Cheney Parish Council are committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled professionally and promptly. The council is dedicated to investigating complaints fully and aims to achieve a resolution to any complaint made.

The following policy has been created to outline a transparent and fair process when handling any type of complaint received.

The council welcomes feedback from the public at all times and operates in a way that is open to honest and reflective comments.

Individual councillors and the Parish Council will handle all complaints in the following manner:

- By being helpful and responsive when receiving or dealing with a complaint
- Making sure that the complaint is handled in a fair, concise and transparent way
- Ensuring that the complaint is dealt with in a quick, thorough and consistent way.
- That the outcome of the complaint is decisive and gives a clear definitive outcome

Definition of a complaint

The definition of a complaint according to The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) offers the definition below:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the parish council's action or lack of action or about the standard of service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Parish Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Parish Council"

The council determines complaints in two ways:

Informal Complaints

Formal Complaints

Repeated or Vexatious Complaints

Informal Complaints



Complaints policy

An informal complaint can be made to the council in person, via letter, telephone, email or to the Chairman of the council. The Clerk will aim to resolve the complaint informally when possible. The council would hope that most complaints can be resolved informally and satisfy the complainant. The Clerk will communicate the outcome of an informal complaint to the complainant.

Should the complainant not be happy with the outcome, the complaint will be moved to the formal complaints process.

Formal Complaints

Should the informal process not satisfy the complainant the formal process will need to be followed.

The following steps should take place to make a formal complaint:

- 1. The complainant needs to formalise the complaint in writing address it to either the Chairman of the Council or The Clerk. The complaint should contain as much detail as possible.
- 2. The Chairman or the Clerk will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within seven working days of receiving the complaint.
- 3. The Chairman of the Council and the Clerk will meet and discuss the complaint and review all the information provided.
- 4. The Chairman and the Clerk will have 30 working days to officially respond to the complaint in writing with relevant findings and a conclusion to the complaint. This may be extended if the council needs further time to investigate or if legal services are required. The complainant will be informed of this extension at the first opportunity.
- 5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the complaint or if the complaint is not dealt with in a satisfactory timeframe the complainant may ask for the matter to be taken to Full Parish Council for review.
- 6. When a meeting is required with full council the complainant will be given a date, time and place. At least 7 working days notice will be given for this meeting. The complainant may bring with them any evidence to the meeting and can submit and documents to be reviewed. Any documentation which will be provided should be sent to the Clerk at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting to allow time for review and distribution. The Clerk will make any relevant documentation available to the complainant prior to the meeting. The Clerk will determine if the meeting should be closed to the members of the public. This will be decided depending on the manner of the complaint and any confidential issues which may arise.
- 7. The Chairman of the council will introduce everyone at the meeting and will first give the complainant an opportunity to share the details of the complaint and why they feel that their complaint has not been satisfied. They may present their documents and evidence to the full council at this time. The Council will then get an opportunity to ask questions to the complainant and raise any points. The Chairman will do this in the first instance but all councillors attending will have an opportunity to speak directly to the complainant.
- 8. The Clerk and the complainant will then leave the room and allow the council to review all the evidence and reach a decision. Each councillor will have a vote on how to proceed which will be proposed at the meeting. Any councillor who may be part of the complaint will be excluded from the decision-making process and will not be allowed a vote.



Dadlington & Sutton Cheney Parish Council

Complaints policy

The following outcomes may be recorded

- a. **Outcome made by the Clerk is upheld** The complainant will be informed at the time of the meeting, with reasons behind the decision. The outcome will be formalised in writing within 7 working days of the meeting
- b. The council decide to uphold the complainant's complaint The council will recommend in person what has been upheld and will outline in writing what the council has decided and what changes (if applicable) will be made. If the complaint is upheld this is memorialised at the next full parish council meeting.

All complaints made about the individual councillors should be put in writing to the monitoring officer at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

If the complaint alleges misconduct by an employee the complaint may be referred to the Parish Council's Disciplinary and Grievance policy.

If there is an allegation that a criminal offence has taken place the Clerk will likely deal with the complaint by referring it directly to the police.