

Potterhanworth Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Approved and adopted by Council on 27-May-2025, minute ref: 6.e.

To be review annually in April.

Introduction

This complaints procedure is designed to deal with complaints made about the Council's action or perceived lack of action, or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken, or the service provided by the Council itself acting as a corporate body or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

A complaint can only be processed by the Council at a properly convened meeting of either the full Council, or of a Committee tasked with investigating the matter.

Any complaint that involves one of the Council's employees will be dealt with in the first instance in accordance with this procedure, and should further action be required, in accordance with the Council's internal employment / disciplinary processes.

Please be aware that there are other bodies with responsibility for certain types of complaint:

<i>Individual member's conduct alleged to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council</i>	<i>The relevant principal authority Monitoring Officer should be contacted – the District Council has responsibility for such matters</i>
<i>Alleged financial irregularity</i>	<i>Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (Audit Commission Act 1998 s.16)</i>
<i>Alleged criminal activity</i>	<i>The Police</i>

Before the meeting

1. Any complaint about the Council's procedures, or administration, should be made to the Clerk to the Council via potterhanworthparishclerk@gmail.com
2. If the complainant does not wish to make the complaint via the Clerk to the Council, or the complaint is about the Clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Council c/o Potterhanworth Parish Council, The Pavilion, off Queensway, Moor Lane, Potterhanworth, LN4 2EA and marked Private & Confidential.
3. The Clerk to the Council/Chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and advise when the matter will be considered by either the Council, or a nominated Committee, working on behalf of the Council within 10 working days.
4. All complaints will be treated as confidential, and any information collected or stored in the process, will be sensitively handled in accordance with the direction and guidelines of the Data Protection Act 2018.

5. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting at which the complaint will be considered. Complainants may be accompanied by a representative, if required.
6. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant is required to provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other items on which the complaint is based.
7. At least 2 clear working days before the meeting, the Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting, in accordance with the data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR regulations.

At the meeting

8. The council shall exclude the public and press whilst discussion of the matter takes place. Any decision on a complaint shall subsequently be announced at a meeting in public, whilst considering any duties to safeguard personal data as under (4) above.
9. The Chairman will introduce everyone at the meeting and explain the procedure to be followed.
10. The complainant will be asked to outline the grounds for the complaint, and thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and (ii) members of the Council.
11. The Clerk to the Council will then have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and then (ii) members.
12. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
13. The Clerk will be offered the opportunity to summarise the position on behalf of the Council.
14. The Clerk and complainant will both be asked to leave the room whilst members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
15. The complainant will be given the opportunity to await the outcome but if a decision is unlikely to be finalised quickly, will be advised when a decision is likely to be made and communicated to them.

After the meeting

16. Any decision will be confirmed to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any further action to be taken.
17. The Council's decision on the matter will be final.