

# **LOPPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Complaints Procedure**

1. This policy sets out the procedure for handling complaints about the Loppington Parish Council's (the Council) procedures, administration, or services. It aims to ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, and consistently. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

### **2. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to complaints made by members of the public about:

- The Council's procedures or administration
- The conduct of Council staff (excluding councillors)
- Standard of services provided by the Council

Excluded Complaints:

- Financial irregularities: referred to the Council's auditor
- Criminal activity: referred to the Police
- Member conduct: referred to the Monitoring Officer, Legal and Democratic Services Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury. SY2 6ND

You can find a copy of the Complaint Form on Shropshire Council's website at:

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/legal-and-democratic-services/shropshire-councillors/complaints-about-councillor-conduct/>

- Employee conduct: handled via internal disciplinary procedures

### **3. Informal Complaints**

Many complaints can be resolved informally. Complainants are encouraged to contact the Clerk in the first instance. If unresolved, the complainant may proceed to the formal complaints process.

If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a councillor, or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

If the complaint is about the actions of the Clerk the complainant may be advised to contact the Chair.

On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (or Chair of Council, if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

Where the Clerk to the Council or a councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chair of Council. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with complainant to the next meeting of the Council.

The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.

The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at a Council meeting in public.

#### **4. Formal Complaints Procedure**

##### **4.1 Submission**

The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council at [clerk@loppingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@loppingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk) or c/o Old School House, Ash Magna, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 4DR, and include details of the complaint, including relevant events, dates, names of relevant persons, or, if the complaint concerns the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Council. Assistance will be provided if needed.

##### **4.2 Acknowledgement**

Receipt of the complaint shall be acknowledged by the Clerk (or Chair) and the complainant will be advised when the matter will be considered by a meeting of councillors convened for the purpose as soon as is practicable.

##### **4.3 Pre-Meeting Preparation**

- The complainant will be informed of the date the complaint will be considered.
- Both parties must exchange relevant documentation at least seven clear working days before the meeting.

##### **4.4 Meeting Procedure**

- The Chairman will introduce attendees and explain the process.
- The complainant (or representative) will present their case.
- The Clerk (or Chair of the meeting) will respond on behalf of the Council.
- Both parties may ask questions and then summarise their positions.
- The complainant will leave the room while the Meeting deliberates.

##### **4.5 Decision**

- The decision will be confirmed in writing within **10** working days.
- Any actions to be taken will be detailed.
- The outcome will be reported at the next Council meeting, respecting confidentiality.

The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

## **5. Appeals**

- Appeals must be submitted within 14 days of the decision.
- Two councillors not involved in the original decision will review the complaint.
- A decision will be communicated within 21 days of receiving the appeal.

## **6. Habitual or Vexatious Complaints**

The Council may take action if a complainant behaves in a way that:

- Impedes investigation
- Is abusive or threatening
- Has significant resource implications

Actions may include:

- Restricting contact
- Refusing further correspondence

Any such decision will be reviewed after six months.

## **7. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All complaints will be handled confidentially. Personal data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Adopted November 2025