STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Complaints Policy

Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's actions or lack of action, about the standard of a service, or about an administrative fault such as not following procedures, standing orders, or making a mistake. This applies whether the action was taken, or the service provided, by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

The Complaint Procedure is for residents who live in or near the Council's area, and who are affected by the Council decisions. It is also for other individuals or organisations or unincorporated bodies, affected by Council business.

The Complaints Policy does not relate to complaints received about services delivered by any other body.

Principles of the Complaints Policy

A complaint against the Council will be treated as a complaint against the body corporate of the Council, not as a complaint about individual employees or members.

Council will engage in procedures other than the Complaints Procedure in respect of the following type types of complaint:

- Where the complaint alleges financial irregularity, local electors have a statutory right to object to the external auditor and will be referred to this body.
- Where the complainant alleges criminal activity, the matter will be referred to the police.
- Where the complaint relates to a member allegedly breaching the code of conduct, the complainant will be advised that the Parish Clerk will undertake the initial investigation and may refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer at Huntingdonshire District Council, to decide if the matter is a breach of code of conduct.
- Where a breach of code of conduct has been established, the matter will be dealt with either by the Parish Clerk or the Monitoring Officer at Huntingdonshire District Council, who will decide on a suitable course of sanction. Please refer to the Complaints Procedure for full details on the procedure that will be followed.
- Where the complaint is about a member of staff the disciplinary procedure will be instigated.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure is not a means of redress for its members or staff.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Council requires a formal complaint to be submitted in writing or by email.

All complaints will be properly investigated.

All formal complaints will be brought to the attention of the Council.

The complaints procedure will consist of two stages, allowing for an appeal to be heard. Members involved in the original decision will not participate in the determination of an appeal.
In all instances, the Council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018.
The complainant has the right to confidentiality unless he/she waives their right.

The Council will ensure that the Complaints Procedure is:

- well published, easily accessible and easy to use
- helpful and receptive
- not adversarial
- fair and objective
- based on clear procedures and defined responsibilities
- thorough, rigorous and consistent
- decisive and capable of putting things right where necessary
- sensitive to the special needs and circumstances of the complainant
- has adequate resources
- fully supported by members and officers
- provides responses that are proportionate; noting that one size does not fit all
- ensure timely resolution
- regularly reviewed to ensure fit for purpose
- complaints are analysed to spot patterns and lessons for service improvement.

Policy Review

Reviewed: 12 May 2026 (agenda item PC108/26)
Next review date: May 2027