KINGS CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Reviewed and Adopted: May 2026
Review Date: May 2027

1. Introduction

Kings Cliffe Parish Council ("the Council") is committed to providing high-quality services, acting openly and transparently, and responding appropriately to concerns raised by residents, councillors, service users, contractors, and members of the public.

The Council recognises that complaints are an opportunity to improve services, procedures, and communication.

This policy sets out the procedure for dealing with complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints regarding:
- The administration of the Council;
- The conduct of Council business;
- The actions or decisions of Council employees;
- The delivery of Council services;
- Failure to follow Council procedures or policies;
- Communication and customer service issues.

This policy does not apply to:
- Complaints regarding councillor conduct;
- Matters subject to legal proceedings;

• Insurance claims;
• Financial irregularities or suspected fraud;
• Staff grievances or internal employment matters.

3. Principles

The Council will:
• Treat complaints seriously;
• Handle complaints fairly, consistently and proportionately;
• Treat complainants with courtesy and respect;
• Maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
• Seek to resolve complaints promptly and informally where possible;
• Learn from complaints to improve services.

The Council expects complainants to treat councillors and staff respectfully and avoid abusive or threatening behaviour.

4. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, complaints should initially be raised informally with the Parish Clerk.

Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion, clarification, or explanation.

The Clerk will attempt to resolve informal complaints within 10 working days where reasonably practicable.

5. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Submission of Complaint
Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk and include:

• Name and contact details;
• Details of the complaint;
• Relevant dates and supporting information;
• Details of previous attempts to resolve the issue;
• Desired outcome.

Stage 2 – Acknowledgement
The Council will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.

Stage 3 – Investigation
The Parish Clerk will normally investigate complaints unless there is a conflict of interest.

Stage 4 – Complaint Hearing
Where necessary, a Complaints Panel of three councillors may be convened.

Stage 5 – Outcome
A written response will normally be issued within 20 working days.

6. Complaints About Councillors

Complaints alleging breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer at North Northamptonshire Council.

Such complaints are dealt with under the authority's standards arrangements and not under this procedure.

7. Complaints About Employees

Complaints relating to employees shall be handled confidentially.

The Council will protect employee rights and comply with employment legislation.

Any action relating to staffing matters shall remain confidential.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The Council will process personal information in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation.

Complaint information will only be shared where necessary for investigation and resolution.

9. Vexatious, Persistent or Abusive Complaints

The Council may restrict or refuse communication where a complainant:
- Behaves abusively or aggressively;
- Makes repeated complaints without new evidence;
- Makes unreasonable demands on Council resources;
- Harasses councillors or staff.

Any such decision will be proportionate, reasonable and properly recorded.

10. Record Keeping

The Parish Clerk shall maintain a record of:
- Complaints received;
- Investigations undertaken;
- Outcomes and actions;
- Lessons learned.

Records shall be retained in accordance with the Council's document retention arrangements.

11. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner where required by changes in legislation, guidance, or operational need.

Agreed: 14th May 2026 **Min Ref: 26/58**

COMPLAINT FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Details of Complaint

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Previous Action Taken

Have you attempted to resolve this matter informally? Yes / No

_____

_____

_____

Desired Outcome

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____

Date: _____