

# HATHERSAGE PARISH COUNCIL



## Complaints Policy

Version	Status	Date
01	Approved HPC (123/23)	7 November 2023

Reviewed	Date	Next review
		2025

## Welcoming Complaints

Hathersage Parish Council is keen to hear people's comments and feedback. Complaints are valued because they provide a chance to improve services, put things right if there has been an error, and to make sure that the same mistake is not repeated.

## Scope of Complaints Policy

Hathersage Parish Council's Complaints Policy can deal with complaints about:

- ✓ **Administration or procedures**
- ✓ **Services, facilities, or amenities**
- ✓ **Data protection matters**

Please note that the following types of complaint are **excluded** from consideration under this Complaints Policy:

- **Complaints about employees of the Parish Council** (*dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's internal discipline and grievance procedures*)
- **Complaints about the conduct of a Parish Councillor** (*considered against the Code of Conduct [013-2019-Code-of-Conduct-Approved-V02.docx \(live.com\)](#) by the District Councillor's Monitoring Officer*)
- **Complaints about policy decisions** (*these will be referred to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration*)
- **Complaints of alleged criminal activity, where there is a legal remedy and/or where legal proceedings have been initiated** (*will not be dealt with*)
- **Complaints about financial irregularities** (*should be reported to the External Auditor and/or the District Councillor's Monitoring Officer*)
- **Anonymous complaints** (*will not be accepted*)

Please email the Parish Clerk for contact details of the District Council's Monitoring Officer and External Auditor – [clerk@hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Complaints Officer

The Clerk to the Parish Council is the Complaints Officer. They will be responsible for:

- The day to day operation and management of the complaints policy and procedures
- Overseeing, and undertaking where necessary, the investigation of formal complaints, within the relevant time scales
- Maintaining a record of all complaints received including details of the nature of the complaint, action taken, outcome, and time taken to resolve
- Identifying improvement points arising from any complaints
- Identify staff training issues

## How to Complain

- (b) Please put your complaint in writing, to the Clerk, providing as much detail, evidence (e.g. photographs) as possible and including your contact details:

**Maura Sorensen**

**Parish Clerk**

Heart of Hathersage

Main Road,

Hathersage

Derbyshire S32 1BB

Email [clerk@hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk)

- (c) If you prefer to report a complaint verbally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk, a written record of your complaint will be made, noting your name and contact details and the nature of your complaint.

- (d) If your complaint concerns the Clerk, you are advised to write to the Chair of the Parish Council:

**Jane Marsden**

**Chair of Parish Council**

Heart of Hathersage

Main Road,

Hathersage

Derbyshire S32 1BB


Email [jane@hope-valley.co.uk](mailto:jane@hope-valley.co.uk)

Please note, depending on the nature of the complaint, it may not be possible to grant confidentiality.

## Complaints Procedures

The following procedures will be adopted for dealing with complaints under Hathersage Parish Council's Complaints Policy.

1. The Clerk will contact the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within fourteen working days of receipt.
2. (a) On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) 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.  
  
(b) Where the Clerk 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.
3. The Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of full Council.
4. 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 Parish Council orally.
5. 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 the Council meeting in public.
6. If a complaint is considered at full Council, then two nominated Councillors should not take part in the proceedings. They will then be able to handle any appeal if required.
7. The Clerk should normally represent the Council through the proceedings, but a nominated Councillor may act instead
8. The Council may consider in the circumstances of any particular complaint whether to make any without liability payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss as a result of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from the Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.

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9. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than ten working days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
  10. 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.
  11. Should the complainant not agree with the outcome they are entitled to appeal the decision within fourteen working days of receipt of the proceedings.

#### Appeals

12. The Councillors nominated to handle the appeal should, within fourteen working days of receiving the appeal, examine the way in which the Council dealt with the complaint.
13. If procedures were correctly handled by the Council, then the appellant should be notified that the appeal has not been successful. If the complaint was not handled correctly, then full Council will be asked to reconsider the complaint at the next scheduled meeting. The appellant will be informed of the date, time and venue and invited to attend the meeting.
14. The appellant should be notified of the result of the appeals process within fourteen working days.
15. Unreasonably persistent complaints, without any new or additional supporting evidence, will not be considered by the Parish Council.

Version	Date	Change detail
01	07/11/2023	New <b>Complaints Policy and Procedures Version 1.0</b> drafted for full Council approval