



Weasenham Parish Council

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Adopted: June 2022
Reviewed: November 2025
Next Review: November 2027

Aim of the Complaints Procedure

Weasenham Parish Council aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services.

It will strive to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with efficiently and within appropriate timescales. Where a complaint is upheld, the Council will ensure that measures are put in place to negate a repeat of the issue.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant.

What is a Complaint

The Parish Council will investigate a complaint from a person, or their nominated representative, if it is one of the following:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the failure to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
- Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Parish Council.
- Failure to observe the Parish Council's policies or procedures.
- Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of staff.
- Harassment, bias or discrimination.

The Complaints Procedure does not cover:

- Complaints about the conduct of Parish Councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Breckland District Council using their Standards Complaint Form ([Councillor standards complaint form - Breckland Council](#))
- Where a person wishes to disagree with a Parish Council decision or policy or makes a request under the Freedom of Information Act. For the latter, please see the relevant [guide](#).

Making a Complaint

A formal written letter (to include emails) of complaint must be sent to the Clerk or if the complaint involves the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Council shall, at its discretion, dismiss any complaints it deems to be vexatious or unreasonable. Definitions of these terms are provided in the Council's 'Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints and Communications Policy'.

Complaint Handling

The Clerk or Chairman will provide written acknowledgement of it within three working days of receipt and provide a copy of this complaint procedure. They will ascertain whether the complainant wishes the matter to be treated confidentially and also if the complainant wishes the complaint to be dealt with formally or informally.

If the complainant chooses to go down the informal route, then the matter can be investigated by the Clerk or Chairman. This should be done as quickly as possible, and the findings and determination of the complaint reported back to the complainant. If the complainant accepts the determination, then the matter can be closed at that point and reported at the next full meeting of the Parish Council. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal approach, then the formal approach must be adopted.

If the complainant opts at the outset for the matter to be addressed formally, it will be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council. If more than 21 days is to lapse between receipt of the complaint and the next meeting of the Parish Council, the Chairman will convene an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council to receive and hear the complaint.

Complainants will be asked by formal letter to attend the meeting and will be informed that they may be accompanied by another person.

At the meeting, the Parish Council may resolve to exclude members of the public and press to ensure confidentiality.

The Parish Council, through a resolution, may appoint an independent person as an impartial arbitrator in the process.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman will explain how the meeting will proceed.

Complainants will be asked to provide any new information or supporting evidence and will be invited to make a verbal representation to the meeting.

Councillors will be invited by the Chairman to ask questions of the complainant.

The Chairman and the complainant will summarise their respective positions.

The complainant will then leave the meeting, and the Council will consider their findings.

The complainant will be informed by letter of the outcome of the process within five working days of the meeting. If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, they will be advised to elevate their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Chairman will report the outcome of the process to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Minutes of the meeting will be kept and will be available to all parties involved in the complaint.

Anonymous Complaints

The Parish Council will not action any information/complaints made anonymously whether by telephone, email or letter.

They will report any potentially criminal matter to the Police.

If any Parish Councillor or the Clerk receives an anonymous phone call the caller will be advised that anonymous calls cannot be actioned, other than to inform the Police

if appropriate. Furthermore, the caller will be advised that any complaint against the Parish Council should be put in writing to the Clerk and any complaint about an individual Parish Councillor should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer at Breckland District Council.

Abusive calls will be terminated and not processed further.