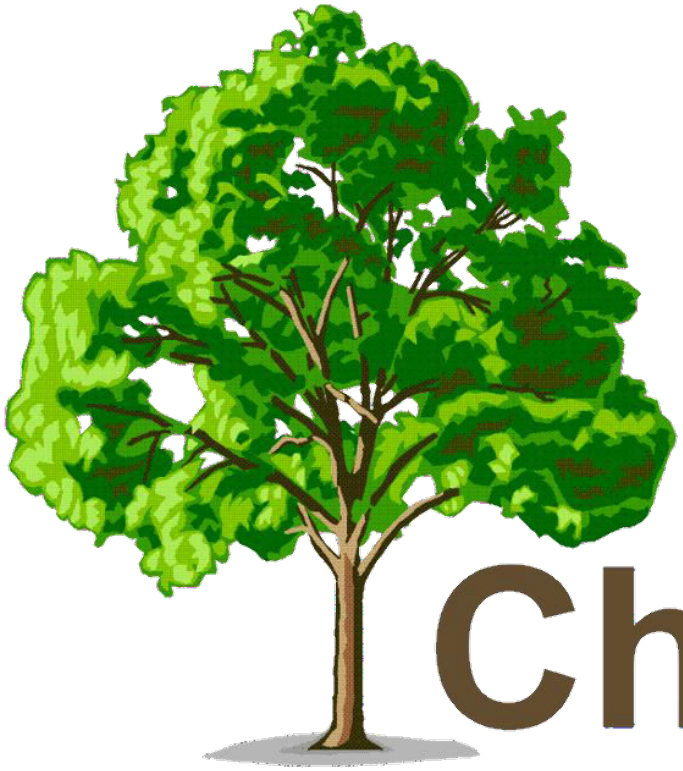


Charvil

Parish Council

Complaints Policy

Version 1.4 – May 2026

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1 Document Control Information

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Version Control:

Version	Date	Description
1.0	May 2018	Policy Published
1.1	May 2024	Reviewed & Updated
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1.3	May 2025	Reviewed, no updates required
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Approved by:

Title	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of the Council			
Clerk to the Council	Miranda Parker		

Planned Review Date:

May 2027

2 References

UK Government. (1972). Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972.

3 Introduction

3.1 The Parish Council provides many services to community groups, sports teams, companies and individuals.

3.2 The Council try to get the service delivery right every time, but there are occasions when users of Parish services maybe dissatisfied with the performance, for any number of reasons. This policy sets out how to raise a complaint with the Parish Council.

4 Informal Complaint

4.1 It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route.

4.2 Informal complaints can be made by telephone or e-mail.

4.3 The complaint will be handled by the most appropriate member of staff, depending on the nature of the complaint.

4.4 The Clerk will be kept informed of the handling of the complaint and its resolution.

4.5 Complaints should always be directed through the Council officers, not through individual Councillors.

4.6 A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not in a position to resolve complaints.

4.7 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved through this informal route.

4.8 However, the Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach had not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is so serious, then the formal complaints process should be followed.

5 Formal Complaint

5.1 The Clerk to the Council is responsible for managing the formal complaints process.

5.2 The Clerk is the senior officer of the Council, effectively its General Manager.

5.3 If a formal complaint is being raised against the Clerk, then the process as detailed should be followed, but the Chairman of the Council should be informed instead of the Clerk.

5.4 A formal complaint can only be submitted in writing to the Council, it should be addressed to the Clerk, marked “Confidential – Formal Complaint”, this will ensure the matter is handled by the Clerk’s nominated deputy, should the Clerk be away.

5.5 The Council encourages contact by email and telephone, but as a formal complaint is a serious matter, it will only accept these in writing.

5.6 The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days.

5.7 The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within ten working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution.

5.8 If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed.

5.9 The Clerk will report to the Council summary details of the complaint and a summary of its resolution. This summary report will exclude the names of the complainant.

5.10 If the Clerk is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution then the matter will be referred to a meeting of the Council’s Complaints Committee.

6 Complaints Committee

6.1 The Complaints Committee is a properly formed committee of the Parish Council.

6.2 The panel will be constituted of six members to ensure that three members of the committee are available, at short notice, to review a complaint.

6.3 The Complaints Committee has delegated authority from the Parish Council to review and decide on complaints.

6.4 Three members will review a complaint; this will ensure the panel is quorate and that the number of members present is not excessive.

6.5 The panel is subject to all of the normal meeting notification, agenda and minute requirements, as laid down in the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

6.6 Arrangements for minute taking will be reviewed when a Complaints Committee meeting is called.

6.7 It is expected that the Complaints Committee will be able to meet within seven working days of being notified by the Clerk.

7 Prior to the Meeting

7.1 Seven clear working days before the Complaints Committee meeting the complainant will provide the Parish Council with copies of all documentation, or other evidence (such as photographs) that they intend to introduce to the Complaints Committee meeting.

7.2 The Parish Council will provide the same to the complainant.

8 At the Meeting

8.1 The Complaints Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press (UK Government, 1972).

8.2 As far as possible the Council carries out its business in public, but matters that involve individual identified members of staff, may require the exclusion of the press and public.

8.3 The Chairman of the Complaints Committee shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure to be used to consider the complaint.

8.4 The meeting should be as informal and friendly as possible, without prejudicing the need to consider properly the matter under discussion.

8.5 The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and panel members given the opportunity to ask any question of the complainant.

8.6 If relevant, the Clerk (deputy or other officer) will explain the Council's position and panel members shall ask any questions.

8.7 The complainant is to be offered the opportunity of a last word as a means of summing up their position.

8.8 The Clerk (or deputy) is to be offered the opportunity of a last word as a means of summing up their position.

8.9 The Clerk and complainant shall be asked to leave the room while panel members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been made clearly.

8.10 If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties should be invited back.

8.11 In any case both parties return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.

8.12 The announcement of any decision will be made in public, at the next Council meeting.

9 Timings

9.1 The Parish Council will try to adhere to the timings outlined in this policy, but in the case of a complex complaint, or the absence of a member of staff who is involved in the complaint, may mean that the timings vary.

9.2 Should this occur then the complainant will be kept advised of the revised timescales.

10 Complaints against Parish Council Staff

10.1 A formal complaint is a serious matter.

10.2 A complaint involving a member of the Council's staff could result in disciplinary action; or in cases of gross misconduct dismissal from the Council's employment.

10.3 The Council will not under any circumstances enter into any correspondence, or discussion, with any complainant about any action taken, formally or informally against any member of its staff.

10.4 This is expressly to protect the employment rights to which all employees of the Council are entitled.

11 Complaints against Councillors

11.1 This policy does not cover complaints against an individual Councillor. A complaint about a Parish Councillor should be addressed to:

The Monitoring Officer
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks
RG40 1BN

11.2 The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor. It will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct.

11.3 Complaints must be about a Councillor's failure to follow the Code of Conduct. Further information is available from the Wokingham Borough Council website. https://www.wokingham.gov.uk

12 Anonymity

12.1 The Council will not acknowledge or consider, under any circumstances, informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.

13 Review

13.1 This policy will be reviewed annually