



Complaints Policy and Procedures

This policy sets out Cuxton Parish Council's procedures for dealing with complaints. A complaint being an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action, lack of action or standard of service.

The Complaints Policy is not designed to be an appeal system to question decisions of the Council which were properly taken or to challenge policy. It is to check that everything that should have been done has been done and that our procedures and policies have been followed.

This complaints policy does not apply to the following:

Type of Conduct	Refer to
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure
Councillor conduct	The Monitoring Officer at Medway Council. He can only deal with matters covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct.
Criminal Activity	The Police
Freedom of Information Complaints	The Information Commissioner

Complaints Policy

1. All complaints must be in writing and addressed to The Clerk or The Chairman of Cuxton Parish Council at The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Bush Road, Cuxton, Kent, ME2 1DL or emailed to clerk@cuxtonpc.org.uk. The complainant should give their contact information and details of the complaint, including dates.
2. Complaints about Cuxton Parish Council will be dealt with using either the formal or informal complaints procedure outlined below.
3. All complaints received will be recorded by the Clerk in the Cuxton Parish Council Complaints Book and will detail the Complainant, date, nature and details of the complaint, the route followed and date and details of its resolution.
4. Cuxton Parish Council will not acknowledge or consider any informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.
5. Cuxton Parish Council aims to deal with most complaints within 12 weeks, however complex complaints may take longer.

Informal Complaints Procedure (ICP)

The ICP procedure will follow the following stages:

1. The complaint will be handled by the Clerk together with the most appropriate council member, as determined by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman in consultation with the Clerk.
2. The complainant will be contacted as soon as possible to inform them of the persons appointed to deal with their complaint.
3. The Designated Persons (DPs) will contact the complainant to seek clarification on the nature of the complaint and give them an opportunity to comment.
4. The DPs will try and reach an agreed resolution with the complainant.
5. The DPs will make a report to the Council in closed session as to whether a resolution has or has not been achieved.

If there is no satisfactory resolution to the complaint then the formal procedure will be triggered.

Formal Complaints Procedure (FCP)

This stage will be entered into if the informal complaints procedure has failed to achieve a satisfactory resolution or due to the seriousness of the complaint requiring the matter to be determined by more formal procedures.

1. Formal complaints will be handled by the Complaints Committee (CC) who are solely responsible for managing the formal complaints process. If the complaint is about the Council's actions or decisions where a member of the Complaints Committee has been involved, that member cannot take part in the process and the CC shall appoint a substitute.
2. The Clerk or Chairman (if not the subject of the complaint) of the CC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days and inform the complainant of the councillor who will be leading the FCP for their case.
3. The CC will keep the complainant regularly updated of progress until the investigation is complete. The timescale of updates will be discussed and agreed with the complainant prior to the commencement of the investigation. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed and the CC will provide a report to main council at the next meeting in closed session. The report will not contain personal details of the complainant.
4. If the CC cannot resolve the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution then the matter will be referred to a full meeting of Council in closed session.

Complaints Committee

Terms of Reference

1. The committee shall consist of: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and 2 other members of the Council.
2. The Committee will be chaired by the Council Chairman or Vice-Chairman.
3. The Committee will only be convened as and when necessary.
4. The outcome of the investigation and final resolution will be communicated to the Clerk for inclusion in the complaints book

Signed: Kay Hutchfield

Chairman

Date: 21.07.2022