

Upper Heyford Parish Council Complaints Policy

Reviewed & Approved in the Parish Council Meeting on the 17th July 2025
Minute Reference 19. a)
Next review July 2027

1. Purpose

Upper Heyford Parish Council is committed to providing high-quality services and acting in the best interests of the local community. This policy sets out how members of the public can raise concerns or complaints, and how these will be handled fairly, promptly, and effectively.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by members of the public about:

- The standard of service provided by the Parish Council
- The conduct of Parish Council staff or contractors
- Actions or decisions taken by the Council or its representatives

This policy does not cover:

- Complaints about the conduct of individual councillors (these are referred to the Monitoring Officer at the District or Unitary Council)
- Matters that are subject to legal proceedings or covered by insurance
- Employee grievances or disciplinary matters (covered by separate internal procedures)
- Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection laws

3. Principles

- Complaints will be handled objectively, confidentially, and in a timely manner.
- Complainants will be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Anonymous complaints will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- The Council will learn from complaints and make improvements where necessary.

4. Informal Complaints

In many cases, complaints can be resolved informally. Members of the public are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the Parish Clerk or a councillor. The aim is to resolve issues quickly without the need for a formal process.

If the complaint is about the Clerk, it should be directed to the Chair of the Council.

5. Formal Complaints Procedure

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, it should be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk and include:

- The complainant's name and contact details
- Details of the complaint (including relevant dates, locations, and individuals involved)
- Any supporting documents or evidence
- The desired outcome or resolution

Upper Heyford Parish Council

Complaints should be sent to:

Sarah Burrows
Clerk to the Council
Upper Heyford Village Hall
Somerton Road
Upper Heyford OX25 5LB

If the complaint is about the Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Council at the same address.

6. Acknowledgement and Timescales

- The Clerk (or Chair, if appropriate) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 working days.
- The complaint will be considered by the Council or a designated panel of councillors, who may request further information or clarification.
- A response will usually be issued within 28 working days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the delay and the expected timeline.

7. Hearing the Complaint

If necessary, a confidential meeting will be arranged where:

- The complainant may attend and speak
- The Council will listen to the concerns
- A resolution will be discussed and, where possible, agreed

The Council's decision is final. A summary of the outcome (but not any confidential detail) may be reported in public minutes if appropriate.

8. Confidentiality

All complaints will be dealt with confidentially. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in investigating or resolving the complaint.

9. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Where a complainant behaves in an unreasonable, persistent, or abusive manner, the Council reserves the right to limit or cease communication, in line with its Vexatious Behaviour Policy.
