

Widdrington & Stobswood Parish Council

Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

Widdrington & Stobswood Parish Council is committed to providing high-quality services to the local community. We recognise that, from time to time, members of the public may have concerns or complaints about the Council's administration, decisions, or actions.

This policy sets out how complaints will be handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about:

- The administration or procedures of the Parish Council.
- The behaviour or conduct of Council employees or contractors.
- The way in which a decision was made or implemented by the Council.

This policy **does not** apply to:

- Complaints about the conduct of individual Parish Councillors (these must be referred to the **Monitoring Officer** at Northumberland County Council).
 - Matters relating to services provided by other authorities or organisations.
 - Employment issues (covered by separate internal procedures).
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3. Principles

- Complaints will be handled **fairly, confidentially, and without bias**.
- Every effort will be made to **resolve complaints informally** in the first instance.
- Complainants will be kept **informed of progress** throughout the process.
- The Council will **learn from complaints** to improve services.

4. How to Make a Complaint

Informal Complaints

Many complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. Members of the public are encouraged to contact the **Parish Clerk** in the first instance, who will aim to resolve the issue promptly.

Contact Details:

Parish Clerk

Widdrington & Stobswood Parish Council

Email: pcclerkwiddstob1@outlook.com

Address: Widdrington Community Centre, Grange Rd, Widdrington Station, Morpeth NE61 5LZ

Formal Complaints

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the Parish Clerk, or if the complaint concerns the Clerk, to the **Chair of the Parish Council**.

The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name and contact details.
- Details of the complaint, including relevant dates and names.
- Any supporting evidence.
- The desired outcome or resolution.

5. Complaint Handling Procedure

1. Acknowledgement:

The complaint will be acknowledged within **10 working days** of receipt.

2. Investigation:

- The Clerk (or Chair, if appropriate) will investigate the matter.
- The complainant may be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue further.
- Relevant documents and evidence will be reviewed.

3. Outcome:

- A written response will be provided within **20 working days** where possible.

- If further time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason and expected timescale.

4. **Review (if dissatisfied):**

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request that the complaint be reviewed by the **Parish Council**.
 - The Council will review the complaint at the next available meeting in **closed session**, and its decision will be final.
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6. **Confidentiality**

All complaints will be treated with respect and confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in investigating or resolving the matter.

7. **Recording and Learning**

The Clerk will maintain a confidential record of all complaints received and their outcomes. The Council will review complaints periodically to identify any patterns or improvements needed in its operations.

8. **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed **every two years** or sooner if required by legislation or best practice guidance.

Adopted by Widdrington & Stobswood Parish Council on: 10th November 2025
Next Review Date: 10th November 2027