

# **Complaints Policy of Loddington Parish Council**

Loddington Parish views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

## **Our policy is:**

1. To provide a fair complaints procedure this is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
2. To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
3. To make sure everyone at Loddington Parish Council knows what to do if a complaint is received.
4. To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
5. To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
6. To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

## **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Loddington Parish Council.

## **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in relation to Loddington Parish Council. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use Loddington Parish Council's Discipline and Grievance policies.

## **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Loddington Parish Council

## **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: May 2015

Last reviewed: 2 July 2026

# **Complaints Procedure of Loddington Parish Council**

## **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Written complaints may be sent to Loddington Parish Council care of the Clerk to the Council at 79 Harrington Road Loddington or by e-mail at: clerk@loddingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Verbal complaints may be made by in person to the Clerk to the Council, at the above address or at any Parish Council Meeting.

## **Receiving Complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Loddington Parish Council (for example: client, member)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

## **Resolving Complaints**

### **Stage One**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to Vice Chairman of Loddington Parish Council within two weeks.

On receiving the complaint, the Vice Chairman of Loddington Parish Council records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chairman of Loddington Parish Council.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within one week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply. The Chairman of Loddington Parish Council may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed bi-annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

1. Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
2. Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
3. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
4. Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
5. Show an interest in what is being said
6. Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
7. Ask for clarification wherever necessary
8. Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have  
noted down
9. Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being  
unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the  
complaint  
itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation
10. e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
11. If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the  
responsibility  
of your organisation, then apologise
12. Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
13. Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will  
involve.
14. Don't promise things you can't deliver
15. Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
16. Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
17. Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of  
review  
or appeal
18. Code of Good Governance for Smaller Organisations: Useful Resources  
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