



Somercotes Parish Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY

ADOPTED MAY 2025

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Aim of the Complaints Procedure

The Parish Council aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services.

It will:

- ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint knows how to go about it;
- respond to a complaint efficiently and within a reasonable time;
- ensure that service users are satisfied that the complaint has been taken seriously and, where possible, reasonable measures have been taken to improve services.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant.

What is a Complaint

The Parish Council will investigate a complaint from a person, or their nominated representative, if it is one of the following:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the failure to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
- Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Parish Council.
- Failure to observe the Parish Council's policies or procedures.
- Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of staff.
- Harassment, bias or discrimination.

The Complaints Procedure does not cover:

- Complaints about the conduct of Parish Councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Amber Valley Borough Council
- Where a person wishes to disagree with a Parish Council decision or policy or makes a request under the Freedom of Information Act, whereby there are alternative processes for representation in place.

To make a Complaint

A formal written letter of complaint must be sent to the Clerk or if the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Stage One

In the first instance, formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the Council, who is responsible for managing the complaint and seeking a fair and timely resolution. Complainants should include their name, contact information, and a clear explanation of the issue, including any relevant dates, individuals involved, and supporting documentation. Upon receipt, the Clerk will acknowledge the complaint within five working days and carry out a proportionate investigation. A full written response outlining the findings and any actions to be taken will be issued within twenty working days. If the complaint relates to the conduct of the Clerk, it should instead be directed to the Chair of the Council for handling under the same procedure.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation, they may escalate the matter to the full Parish Council by submitting a written request for an appeal within ten working days of receiving the Stage 1 response. The appeal must set out the grounds on which it is being made and provide any additional supporting information.

Stage Two

The appeal will be considered at the next suitable Council meeting, with all parties involved given the opportunity to present their case. To preserve fairness, any councillors with prior involvement in the complaint will not participate in the appeal decision. The Council will deliberate in private session and issue a written decision within ten working days of the meeting. The decision of the Council will be final, and no further appeal will be available within the Council's procedures. At the meeting the Parish Council may resolve to exclude members of the public and press to ensure confidentiality. Depending on whether the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with in this way.

Anonymous Complaints

The Parish Council will not action any information/complaints made anonymously whether by telephone, email or letter.

They will report any potentially criminal matter to the Police.

If any Parish Councillor or the Clerk receives an anonymous phone call the caller will be advised that anonymous calls cannot be actioned other than to inform the Police if appropriate and that any complaint against the Parish Council should be put in writing to the Clerk and any complaint about an individual Parish Councillor should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer at Amber Valley Borough Council.

Abusive calls will be terminated.