

Huggate Parish Council – Complaints Policy and Procedure

(Aligned with East Riding of Yorkshire Council standards guidance and Local Government Ombudsman expectations)

1. Introduction

Huggate Parish Council is committed to providing high standards of service and accountability. We recognise that, on occasion, individuals may wish to raise concerns about the Council's administration, procedures, or the conduct of its Members.

This procedure explains how complaints will be handled fairly, consistently, and transparently.

This policy does not replace statutory complaint routes where applicable (e.g. planning appeals or Freedom of Information requests).

2. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure applies to complaints about:

- The administration or procedures of Huggate Parish Council
- The actions or inaction of Council employees (including the Clerk)
- Service delivery provided by or on behalf of the Council
- Alleged breaches of Council procedures (non-member conduct issues)

This procedure does NOT cover:

- Complaints about the **conduct of Parish Councillors** (these are dealt with under the Code of Conduct via East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Monitoring Officer)
 - Complaints about decisions properly made by the Council (these should be addressed via reconsideration or public engagement rather than complaint)
 - Matters that are subject to separate legal processes (e.g. planning appeals, employment disputes, or insurance claims)
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3. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, complainants are encouraged to first raise concerns informally with the Clerk or Chair of the Council.

Many issues can be resolved quickly without the need for a formal complaint.

4. Formal Complaints Procedure

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the following process applies:

Step 1 – Submission of Complaint

Complaints must be submitted in writing (email or letter) and include:

- Full name and contact details
- Clear description of the complaint
- Relevant dates, evidence, or supporting information
- Details of any steps already taken to resolve the matter

All complaints should be marked:

“Confidential – Complaint”

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

The Council will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **5 working days**.

Step 3 – Investigation

- The Clerk (or nominated officer) will review the complaint
 - If necessary, the matter may be referred to the Chair or a Complaints Panel of Councillors (excluding any involved in the issue)
 - Relevant information may be requested from both parties
 - The Council will act fairly and proportionately in its investigation
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Step 4 – Response

A formal written response will normally be provided within **20 working days** of receipt of the complaint.

If more time is required, the complainant will be informed of:

- The reason for delay
- A revised response date

The response will include:

- Findings of the investigation
 - Whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
 - Any proposed actions or remedies
 - Any recommendations for service improvement
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5. Complaints About Councillors

Complaints alleging that a Parish Councillor has breached the **Code of Conduct** must be directed to:

The Monitoring Officer

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

County Hall

Cross Street

Beverley

HU17 9BA

Email: standards@eastriding.gov.uk

Such complaints are handled under the **Localism Act 2011 standards regime**, not by the Parish Council itself.

6. Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of this procedure, they may refer the matter to:

- The **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**, where applicable
 - The **Monitoring Officer** (for conduct-related matters)
 - Other statutory bodies, depending on the nature of the complaint
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7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Information will only be shared where necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

8. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

The Council may apply reasonable management measures where complaints are:

- Repeated and substantially similar
 - Vexatious or abusive in nature
 - Intended to obstruct Council business
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9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and best practice guidance issued by East Riding of Yorkshire Council and national bodies.