

GREAT GONERBY PARISH COUNCIL - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

This complaints procedure is designed to deal with complaints made about the Council's action or perceived lack of action, or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself acting as a body corporate, or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

Any complaint will be processed by a specific Disciplinary and Grievances Panel. The panel will be selected as required and will be made up with a minimum of 3 Cllrs with appropriate distance from the complaint topic or named in the complaint. The Panel will conduct a full investigation into the matter and provide recommendations to the Council.

Any complaint that involves one of the Council's employees will be dealt with in the first instance via this complaint's procedure, and if any further action is required, then in accordance with the Council's internal employment processes.

*Please be aware that there are other bodies with responsibility for certain types of complaint: **Individual member's conduct alleged to breach the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council***

The relevant principal authority Monitoring Officer should be contacted – the district council has responsibility for such matters

Alleged financial irregularity

Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (Audit Commission Act 1998 s.16)

Before the meeting

Alleged criminal activity

The Police

1. Any complaint about the Council's procedures or administration should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Council at clerk@greatgonerbyparish.gov.uk
2. If the complainant does not wish to make the complaint via the Clerk to the Council, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Parish Council via their listed email or written letter.

3. The Clerk to the Council/Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise who will lead the specific *Disciplinary and Grievances Panel* and which councillors will support.

4. Please be aware that any complaint will be treated as confidential, and that the council is obliged to comply with its duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 at all times to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

4a. Lawful Processing: Personal data related to the complaint will be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

4b. Data Minimization: Only information strictly necessary for the investigation by the Disciplinary and Grievances Panel will be utilized.

5. The Chair of the panel will invite the complainant in writing to attend a meeting at which the complaint will be considered, this must be a mutually agreed time¹. The complainant must be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative, if required. The complainant is required to provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other items on which the complaint is based before the meeting.

6. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the opportunity to read all material in good time for the meeting.

At the meeting

7. The Chair will introduce everyone at the meeting and explain the procedure to be followed.

8. The complainant will be asked to outline the grounds for the complaint, and thereafter, questions may be asked by members of the panel.

9. Depending on the complaint topic the Clerk to the Council will be invited to the meeting to provide the panel with the formal Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and then (ii) members of the panel.

12. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

13. If in attendance - The Clerk will be offered the opportunity to summarise the position on behalf of the Council.

14. The Chair of the Panel will thank those attending and will give a timeline for next steps including communicating any decision to all interested parties. The Clerk and complainant will both be asked to leave the meeting.

After the meeting

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Adopted: 02/03/26

Approved by: Full Council

Next review: March 2027

15. The panel will take the decision on the complaint and will formally record the summary of the panel meeting, recommendations and final finding. This will be briefed to the Chair.

16. Any decision will be confirmed to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any further action to be taken.

17. Should the Complainant not be content with the finding of the panel they must write to the Chair of the Parish council outlining the detailed reasoning of the appeal. Appeals will be considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair, who will make a final decision on the matter.

18. Secure Retention: The formal record of the panel meeting, recommendations, and final findings will be stored securely in accordance with statutory retention periods.