



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

H. Johnson

June 2026

1. Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns. Data Protection Complaints are dealt with at the bottom of the procedure

3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on 10th March 2020 and reviewed 2022 and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Wealden District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Wealden District Council.

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.

8. The Clerk or the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee or of the Council will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.

9. The Clerk or the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee or the Council will notify you within-twenty working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Full Council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

11. There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken. These matters will be referred to the Council by the Clerk with a summary of the issues raised and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. They may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant and inform the complainant of this, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

12. The Council will treat all complaints seriously and, wherever possible, in confidence. Information relating to a complaint will only be shared with those who need to know in order to investigate and determine the matter. The identity of the complainant will not be disclosed beyond those involved in handling the complaint without their consent, unless this is necessary to properly investigate the complaint or is required by law.

Details of the complaint, including any supporting evidence, may be disclosed to:

- relevant Council officers and Members involved in the investigation or decision-making process;
- any individual or body against whom the complaint is made, where this is necessary to ensure a fair and proper investigation;
- external agencies, where the Council is under a legal obligation to do so.

The Council is subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Information may also be disclosed where required under legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000, subject to any applicable exemptions.

All parties involved in a complaint are expected to respect the confidentiality of the process. Breaches of confidentiality may result in the Council taking appropriate action.

Data Protection Complaints

Where people feel that the Parish Council has infringed data protection legislation due to the way they've handled their personal information (or the personal information of someone for whom they are acting), this would fall under a Data Protection complaint. This could cover complaints about:

- The way the Parish Council has responded to a Subject Access Request or other rights request;
- Security measures used to store their information; and
- How the Parish Council has collected or used their personal information.

The Parish Council needs to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 15 days of receiving it. It will take appropriate steps without unreasonable delay to respond to the complaint, including making enquiries, keeping complainants informed through the process and without undue delay inform them of the outcome of their complaint.

Contacts:

The Clerk of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council

Address: 73 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8HU

Telephone: 01435 865700

Email:

clerk@hw-pc.gov.uk

The Chairman of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council

Address: c/o 73 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8HU

Telephone: 01435 867424

Email: cllr.simonleney@hw-pc.gov.uk