Benwick Parish Council
Complaints Policy and Procedure

Version Control

Adopted: 07/07/2025 (minute ref: 066/25-26 a)

Reviewed: 06/07/2025 (minute ref: 057/26-27a)

1. Purpose and Scope

Benwick Parish Council is committed to providing a high-quality service for the benefit of those who live, work or visit the parish. This Complaints Policy sets out how you may complain if you are dissatisfied with:

- The standard of service received;
- A decision made by the council; or
- An action or lack of action by the council or its staff.

This policy applies to complaints about council procedures, administration, and staff conduct.

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Complaints by one council employee against another, or between employees and the council. These are handled under internal HR procedures.
- Complaints against councillors. These fall under the Members' Code of Conduct and should be referred to the Standards Committee of Fenland District Council via the Monitoring Officer.

A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction by any individual or group, however made, about the conduct, standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff."

2. Influencing Council Decisions

The best time to raise concerns is **before** a decision is made. You can:

- Write to the Clerk before a meeting where the matter will be discussed.
- Speak during the public participation section of a council meeting.

Note: Council decisions may not be revisited for six months unless exceptional circumstances apply (Standing Orders apply).

3. Submitting a Complaint

You may submit your complaint to the Clerk:

- In person
- By telephone
- By email or in writing (see contact details below)

Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your concern informally and immediately. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within **five working days**.

If you feel unable to submit your complaint to the Clerk (e.g., if it concerns the Clerk), you may write to the Chairperson, who will ensure it is reported and investigated appropriately.

A downloadable Complaints Form is available on the Parish Council website to support written submissions.

4. Investigation

The Clerk or the Chairman will coordinate the investigation, obtaining necessary information from all parties involved.

- Where the complaint concerns the Clerk, a councillor will be appointed to investigate.

You will be informed in writing of the outcome within **20 working days**, or notified of any delay and expected timeframe.

5. Appeal Process

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request a formal review of the complaint. This will be considered at the next appropriate full council meeting.

The decision of the full council will be final.

6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. Personal data will be held securely and used only for complaint handling purposes.

7. Accessibility

This policy is available in large print and alternative formats upon request.

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or best practice. A summary of complaints and resolutions may be published annually (excluding personal details) to promote transparency.

Contacts

The Clerk of Benwick Parish Council

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The Chairman of Benwick Parish Council

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