
Penton Mewsey Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

Penton Mewsey Parish Council is committed to providing a high standard of service. We take complaints seriously and aim to resolve them promptly, fairly, and transparently.

This procedure is based on guidance issued by the **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** and supported by the **Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)**.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public about the Council's actions, decisions, or administration.

This procedure covers complaints about:

- The administration of the Council
- The conduct of its employees
- The provision of services or facilities

3. What is Not Covered by This Procedure

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- Complaints about **individual councillors' conduct**
→ These must be referred to the **Monitoring Officer at Test Valley Borough Council**
- **Financial irregularities**
→ These must be reported to the Council's external auditor
- **Employee grievances**
→ These are dealt with under internal employment procedures
- Matters that are subject to **legal proceedings or insurance claims**
- Decisions made by the Council properly taken in a formal meeting
(these cannot be "appealed" via this procedure)

4. Informal Resolution

Where possible, concerns should be raised informally with the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

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

Clerk Contact:

- Clerk to Penton Mewsey Parish Council
- Email: Clerk@PentonMewsey.org.uk

5. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Submission of Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint must be made:

- In writing (email or letter) clerk@pentonmewsey.org.uk
- Addressed to the Parish Clerk (or Chairman if the complaint is about the Clerk)

The complaint should include:

- Name and contact details
 - Details of the complaint
 - Any supporting information
 - The outcome sought
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Stage 2: Acknowledgement

The Council will:

- Acknowledge receipt within **5 working days**
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Stage 3: Investigation

The complaint will be:

- Investigated by the Clerk, or
- If the complaint concerns the Clerk, by the Chairman or a nominated councillor

The complainant may be invited to provide further information if necessary.

Stage 4: Response

A written response will be issued within **20 working days** of acknowledgement (where possible), which will include:

- Findings of the investigation
 - Conclusions
 - Any action to be taken
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6. Escalation to Complaints Panel

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may request a review.

Panel Hearing

- A panel of **3 councillors** (not previously involved) will be convened
- The complainant will be invited to attend and present their case
- They may be accompanied by a friend or representative

Procedure at Hearing

- The complainant presents their case
- The Council responds
- Questions may be asked
- The panel deliberates in private

Outcome

- A final written decision will be issued within **10 working days**
 - This decision is final
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7. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively. Personal details will be kept confidential where possible, although information may need to be shared with those involved in investigating the complaint.

8. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

The Council reserves the right to limit or refuse further contact where a complainant:

- Is abusive or unreasonable
- Repeats complaints without new evidence

This will be in line with the Council's policy on unreasonable behaviour.

9. Record Keeping

The Clerk will:

- Maintain a record of all complaints
 - Report anonymised summaries to the Council as appropriate
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10. Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains compliant with NALC/HALC best practice.

Adoption

This Complaints Procedure was adopted by Penton Mewsey Parish Council on:

Date: 6th July 2026

Minutes: 0726/11

Signed: ____Chairman Cllr Venn_____

Chairman