



Public Feedback and Complaints Policy

Clipstone Parish Council want to provide the best service we can and recognise that a good Council always listens to the views, comments and suggestions of its residents.

We want to make it easy for you to give us your feedback, particularly if we have made a mistake which has affected you or if you have not had a positive experience when dealing with us.

We would also be delighted to hear from you when you have been particularly happy with a service you have received from us, or if you have any ideas or suggestions about how we can improve our service to you.

You can contact us by letter, telephone or e-mail to:

Clipstone Parish Office
Village Hall, Church Road
Clipstone
NG21 9DF
Tel: 01623 626857
Email: clerk@clipstoneparishcouncil.org

If you need help giving us your feedback, the Parish Clerk will be happy to assist – or you can ask a family member or friend to talk to us on your behalf.

We record and monitor feedback to make sure we learn from your comments.

Complaints Procedure

We have a straightforward but defined procedure for dealing with complaints. The procedure follows Local Government Ombudsman guidelines. The Ombudsman does not however, have any jurisdiction over parish or town councils.

If you are dissatisfied with a service we have provided, please contact the Parish Clerk to discuss your concerns. This is because we would like to put things right as quickly as possible and may be able to do so if you simply explain your concerns to us. Sometimes we are unable to do what our residents / customers want, perhaps because of the law, but if you contact us at least we can explain the reason(s) for this to you.

If you have already contacted us about an issue and we have not resolved it, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

A complaint is not an enquiry or request for us to do a task or service. A complaint tells us things that have gone wrong, or that you are unhappy with the service you have received and why you are unhappy. The Local Government Ombudsman says that 'A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the

standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.'

A complaint could relate, for example, to:

- The standard of service provided
- Whether the service met your needs
- The time taken to provide the service
- Not receiving the requested or expected service
- The way you were treated
- Equality of opportunity
- Discrimination

Our complaints procedure should not be used to ask us to do something, such as reporting graffiti or litter. This should be done by simply contacting us and letting us know of the problem.

Our complaints procedure can also not be used to request information because you disagree with the law or for matters outside the remit of the Council. There are also different arrangements for investigating complaints about the conduct of councillors.

Our formal complaint procedure has two steps. **Step One** is a complaint to Parish Clerk (or if the matter is about the service provided by the Clerk, to the Chair of the Parish Council). The complaint should be in writing but help can be offered if this is difficult. On receipt we will send you an acknowledgement email / letter and investigate the complaint. We aim to reply in full within 15 working days. If we cannot reply within 15 working days, we will let you know why investigations are taking longer and keep you informed on the progress of your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can progress the matter to **Step Two** by writing to Chair of the Parish Council. The Chair will acknowledge your complaint and let you know the date of the Parish Council meeting at which your complaint will be considered. You will be invited to attend the meeting to explain your complaint. You may bring a representative to assist or support you.

Information about the format of the meeting and how your complaint will be heard will be explained beforehand.

You will normally be notified in writing of the decision of the Parish Council together with details of any action to be taken.

Anonymity

The Council will not acknowledge or consider, under any circumstances, informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.

Unreasonable and vexatious Complaints

Occasionally there are complainants who deliberately seek to be disruptive to the Council through pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct. Whenever a complaint has been received which has been investigated previously and replied to, this will be deemed vexatious.

Vexatious will be defined as manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure and/or has no reasonable foundation and/or is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress to Parish Councillors or staff. A complaint or a person making a complaint may be so unreasonable or persistent or objectionable that they will be deemed vexatious.

Parish Councillors and staff cannot be expected to tolerate unacceptable behaviour that is abusive, offensive or threatening. This behaviour will include (but is not limited to):

- Using abusive, aggressive and/or foul language in any form of communication
- Sending multiple letters or emails
- Leaving multiple voice-mails

Complainants will be deemed vexatious where previous or current contact with them shows they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Persists in pursuing a complaint where it has been fully investigated and full action has been taken within the Parish Council's procedures, but the complainant will not acknowledge or accept this
- Displays unreasonable demands or expectations and fails to recognise that these are unreasonable
- Have threatened a Councillor or the Clerk
- Have harassed or been personally abusive or verbally aggressive towards Councillors or the Clerk dealing with the complaint (this includes the use of foul or inappropriate language)
- Refuses to accept that issues are not within the power of the Council to investigate, change or influence
- Changes the main issue of the complaint or continually raise new issues, especially while the original complaint is being addressed
- Are unwilling to accept documented evidence to support an adequate response
- Have caused persistent offence to a Councillor or the Clerk
- Raises repeat issues that have already been fully addressed
- Persists in seeking an outcome which the Council has explained is unrealistic for legal or policy or other valid reasons
- Continues to challenge the Council for alleged wrongdoing without any cogent basis to do so;
- is pursuing a relatively trivial or highly personalised matter of little benefit to the residents of the Parish
- Pursuing a personal grudge
- Unreasonable persistence
- Unfounded accusations
- Intransigence
- Frequent or overlapping complaints, requests or communications
- Deliberate intention to cause annoyance
- Disproportionate effort is required to deal with a trivial matter
- No obvious intent to obtain information;
- Futile or frivolous requests
- Tone or content of the communication is objectionable, especially if relating to discrimination by race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability

Discretion will be used by the Council in applying the above criteria to identify persistent or vexatious complaints/complainants and in deciding the appropriate action to be taken.

Where complainants have been identified as persistent or vexatious in accordance with the above criteria, Clipstone Parish Council will consider if it wishes to suspend all contact with the complainant. Before doing so the Parish Council may decide to deal with the complainant in one or more of the following ways, as it may be worth considering whether a conciliatory approach could help before determining a complaint as vexatious:

- Specify how future contact will be maintained between the Council and the complainant
- Notify the complainant that the Parish Council has fully responded to all issues and that continuing contact on the same matter will serve no purpose
- Notify the complainant that continual changes in the nature of the complaint(s) will be dealt with as in the paragraph above

The complainant will be notified in writing that they have been considered persistent or vexatious and that this sanction has been invoked as a last resort in order to conclude the matter(s).

Data Protection

To ensure compliance with its obligations in the Data Protection Act 2018, Clipstone Parish Council will not disclose the identity, contact details or other personal data about an individual complainant unless they consent or disclosure is otherwise fair and lawful under the 2018 Act e.g. for the purpose of discharging the council's functions or for the performance of contractual obligations. The Council will ensure that meeting agendas and minutes do not disclose personal data or financial, sensitive or confidential information that relates to an individual complainant or a third party in the agendas or minutes of its meeting.

Local Government Ombudsman

The complainant will be advised of their right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman should they be dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint process.

Adopted date: 26 November 2025

Minute reference: CPC25/26 126b

Signed: D Eskriett