



Wimblington & Stonea
Parish Council

Serving the community since 1894

Policy Document: Complaint & Whistleblowing Policy

Adopted: [12/08/2025]

Minute Number: [137/25a]

Review Date: [12/08/2027]

Any queries or requests for amendments should be addressed to:

Pat Amos

Clerk

Wimblington & Stonea Parish Council

clerk@wimblington-pc.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	4
Overview	5
Informal Complaints	6
Formal Complaints	7
At the Meeting	8
Timings and Correspondence	9
Employment Rights	9
Taking your Complaint Further	9
Whistleblowing Policy	10
Background	10
Principles	11
Procedure	12
Stage 1	12
Stage 2	12
Stage 3	13
Data Protection	14
Annex A Complaint Form	15

Introduction

The Purpose of this document is to define and describe the Complaint & Whistleblowing Policy that has been adopted by Wimblington & Stonea Parish Council.

This policy document will be reviewed by members of Wimblington & Stonea Parish Council and updated or amended where necessary.

Overview

The Parish Council provides many services to the community. We try to get our service delivery right every time, but there are occasions when users of our services maybe dissatisfied with our performance, for any number of reasons.

This policy sets out how to raise a complaint with the Parish Council, and details of the Whistleblowing reporting procedure.

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

Nor will it conduct discussion of any issue via any social media platform.

Informal Complaints

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route.

Informal complaints can be made by telephone, email or by post.

In most cases the complaint will be handled by the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council if the Clerk is on leave.

Complaints should always be directed through the Parish Clerk, not through individual Councillors.

A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not in a position to resolve complaints.

It is expected that most complaints can be resolved through this informal route.

However, the Council appreciates that on occasions an informal approach may not resolve the complaint, or that the initial complaint is so serious, then the formal complaint process should be followed.

Formal Complaints

The Parish Clerk is responsible for managing the formal complaint process.

The only variance to this is if a formal complaint is being raised against the Parish Clerk, then the process as detailed will be followed by the Chairman of the Council.

In the first instance please call the Parish Clerk on 07985 027515.

If the Parish Clerk is on leave or otherwise unavailable, the Chairman of the Parish Council should be contacted on 01354 741894 to advise them of the formal complaint.

The formal complaint then must be submitted in writing using the complaint form which can be found on the Parish Council website <https://wimblington-pc.gov.uk/policies/>, attached to this document at Annex A, or a copy can be obtained from Parish Clerk.

The complaint should be addressed to the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the council where applicable (full address is on the complaint form).

The Council encourages contact by email and telephone; however a formal complaint is a serious matter and can only be accepted in writing using the official complaint form.

The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation or photographs.

The Parish Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint form within five working days.

The Parish Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within ten working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution.

If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution, the complaint is closed.

The Parish Clerk will report to the Council, through the Clerk's report, summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution.

This summary report will exclude the names of the complainant.

If the Parish Clerk is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, then the matter will be referred to a subcommittee consisting of three council members.

The subcommittee has delegated authority from the Parish Council to review and decide on complaints.

The subcommittee is subject to all of the normal meeting notification, agenda and minute requirements, as laid down in the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

Arrangements for minute taking will be reviewed when a Subcommittee meeting is called.

It is expected that the subcommittee will be able to meet within seven working days of being notified by the Clerk.

Prior to the meeting, five clear working days before the subcommittee meeting, the complainant will provide the Parish Clerk with copies of all documentation, or other evidence (such as photographs) that they intend to introduce to the Subcommittee meeting.

The Parish Clerk will provide the same to the complainant if applicable.

At the Meeting

The subcommittee will consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press.

As far as possible the Parish Council carries out its business in public, matters that involve individual identified members of staff, may require the exclusion of the press and public.

The Chairman of the subcommittee shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure to be used in order to consider the complaint made.

The meeting should be as informal and friendly as possible.

The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and Subcommittee members given the opportunity to ask any question of the complainant.

If relevant, the Parish Clerk will explain the Council's position and Subcommittee members shall ask any questions.

The complainant is to be offered the opportunity of a last word as a means of summing up their position.

The Clerk is to be offered the opportunity of a last word as a means of summing up their position.

The Subcommittee will then withdraw and decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made, after their deliberation, the subcommittee will return to the meeting and announce their decision, or to advised when the decision will be made.

The announcement of any decision will be made in public, at the next Council meeting.

Timings and Correspondence

The Parish Council will try to adhere to the timings outlined in this policy, but in the case of a complex complaint, or the absence of a member of staff who is involved in the complaint, may mean that the timings have to vary.

Should this occur then the complainant will be kept advised of the revised timescales.

Employment Rights

The Council will not under any circumstances enter into any correspondence, or discussion, with any complainant about any action taken, formally or informally against any member of staff.

This is expressly to protect the employment rights to which all employees of the Council are entitled.

Taking your Complaint Further

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint at the end of our procedure, you may wish to contact the **Local Government Ombudsman**; the exception to this is if your complaint is regarding a Parish Councillor(s) then you should contact the **Standards Committee** at Fenland District Council.

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

The Standards Committee

Fenland District Council
Fenland Hall, County Road,
March, CAMBS, PE15 8NQ
info@fenland.gov.uk

Whistleblowing Policy

It is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by staff or others working on behalf of the council is reported and properly dealt with.

We therefore require all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the council.

This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters in the public interest. These are called "qualifying disclosures".

A qualifying disclosure is one made by an employee who has a reasonable belief that:

a criminal offence; a miscarriage of justice; an act creating risk to health and safety; an act causing damage to the environment; a breach of any other legal obligation; or concealment of any of the above; is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. You have no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the council's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

If you make a protected disclosure you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because you have made a disclosure.

We encourage you to raise your concerns under this procedure in the first instance.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Staff and others working on behalf of the council should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.
- No employee or other person working on behalf of the council will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure our disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. You should report the matter to the Clerk or the Chair of the Council.

Procedure

If you believe a Councillor has breached the councillor Code of Conduct, then raise it with the Chair of the Council.

Concerns relating to an alleged breach of the councillor Code of Conduct will be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of your own contract of employment, which should be raised via the Grievance Procedure.

Stage 1

In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with the Clerk, who will arrange an investigation of the matter.

The investigation may involve you and other individuals involved giving a written statement.

Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above.

Your statement will be taken into account, and you will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.

The Clerk (or delegated officer) will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to the Council, or any appropriate government department or regulatory agency.

The Clerk (or delegated officer) will also invoke any disciplinary action if required.

On conclusion of any investigation, insofar as confidentiality allows, you will be told the outcome and what the council has done, or proposes to do, about it.

If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained

Stage 2

If you are concerned that the Clerk is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person, you should escalate the matter to the Chair of the Council.

The Chair will arrange for a review of the investigation to be carried out, make any necessary enquiries.

Stage 3

If on conclusion of stages 1 and 2 you reasonably believe that the appropriate action has not been taken, you should report the matter to the relevant body. This includes:

HM Revenue & Customs; The Health and Safety Executive; The Environment Agency; The Serious Fraud Office; The Charity Commission; The Pensions Regulator; The Information Commissioner; The Financial Conduct Authority

You can find the full list in The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>

Data Protection

When an individual makes a disclosure, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy.

Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

Annex A Complaint Form

Complaint Form

Please submit your complaint with the following information:-

Title	
First name	
Surname	
Tel:	
Email:	
Home Address:	

Address:

The Parish Clerk
Mrs Patricia Amos
9b March Rd.
Wimblington, PE15 0RN
Telephone 07985027515
email: clerk@wimblington-pc.gov.uk

Address:

Chairman of the Parish Council
Mrs Maureen Davis
5b March Rd.
Wimblington, PE15 0RN
Telephone 01354 741894
email: mdavis@wimblington-pc.gov.uk

Details of your complaint

--

If necessary please continue on additional sheets