
Complaints Policy and Procedure

Much Hoole Parish Council

MAY 2026

Amy Evans
Clerk, Much Hoole Parish Council



Introduction

Much Hoole Parish Council is committed to providing high-quality services and ensuring that its administration and procedures are carried out effectively and transparently.

The Council takes complaints seriously and views them as an opportunity to improve its services and procedures.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints about the administration of the Council or its procedures.

It does not apply to:

- Complaints about a Councillor. These are subject to the Council's Code of Conduct. Such complaints should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at South Ribble Borough Council.
- Complaints about an employee of the Council (i.e. the Clerk). These will be dealt with internally as an employment matter. The complainant will be assured that the matter will be considered by the Council and that appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

The following procedure applies to complaints relating to the administration of the Council or its procedures.

In this context, a complaint is defined as 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 service provided—whether by the Council itself or by a person or body acting on its behalf.

This policy sets out how to raise a complaint and the procedure the Council will follow in considering and responding to complaints.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Much Hoole Parish Council has a clear and consistent procedure for handling complaints in order to:

- respond to and, where possible, resolve issues raised by members of the public;
- learn from any concerns or mistakes and improve services;
- review and, where appropriate, update procedures and practices.

Definition of a Complaint

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 service provided—whether by the Council itself or by a person or body acting on its behalf.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered.

Complaints Process

The Clerk to the Council is responsible for managing the complaints process. Wherever possible, complaints about administration or procedures should first be raised informally with the Clerk. Many concerns can be resolved quickly at this stage.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be made in writing in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Before the Meeting

- a) The complainant shall submit the complaint in writing to the Clerk, including their name, address, contact details and full details of the complaint.
- b) Complaints should normally be made within **12 months** of the event or matter giving rise to the complaint.
- c) If the complainant does not wish to submit the complaint to the Clerk, it may be addressed to the Chair of the Council.
- d) The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **seven working days** and advise when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee established for that purpose. Any such committee will consist of at least three councillors.
- e) The Council may defer consideration of the complaint where it considers that legal or other professional advice is required.
- f) The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and may be accompanied by a representative. The Council should be notified in advance of who will be attending and in what capacity.
- g) Where the complaint concerns the Clerk, they may also be accompanied by a person of their choice.
- h) The complainant shall provide copies of any supporting documentation at least **seven clear working days** before the meeting. The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation it intends to rely upon in advance of the meeting.

At the Meeting

- a) The Council will consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and press in accordance with relevant legislation. Any final decision will be announced at a Council meeting in public.
- b) The Chair will introduce those present and explain the procedure.
- c) The complainant (or their representative) will be invited to outline the grounds for the complaint.
- d) Members may ask questions of the complainant.
- e) The Clerk or **where appropriate, the Chair of the Council**, will be invited to explain the Council's position.

f) Members and the complainant may ask questions of the Clerk or **where appropriate, the Chair of the Council,**

g) The Clerk or **where appropriate, the Chair of the Council,** followed by the complainant, will be given the opportunity to summarise their position.

h) The complainant and the Clerk or **where appropriate, the Chair of the Council,** will be asked to leave the room while the Council considers the complaint. If clarification is required, both parties may be invited back.

i) The complainant and the Clerk **or where appropriate, the Chair of the Council,** will be invited to return to hear the decision, or advised when the decision will be made.

After the Meeting

a) The decision will be confirmed in writing to the complainant within **seven working days,** together with details of any action to be taken.

b) Where appropriate, the Council may review its procedures to prevent a recurrence of the issue.

Adoption and Review

This Complaints Policy and Procedure was adopted by Much Hoole Parish Council on: 11th May 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Council's Annual Meeting (normally held in May) or sooner if required.

Signed

Clerk: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chair: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____