

OSGATHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Email: clerk@osgathorpeparishcouncil.org.uk

Website: <https://www.osgathorpeparishcouncil.org.uk/>

Based upon the NALC Model Complaints procedure.

Adopted by

This policy was adopted by the Parish Council on 19th March 2024.

Customer Service Standards.

1. Osgathorpe Parish Council is committed to providing its services efficiently and to as high a standard as reasonably possible.
2. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Parish Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Parish Council, this complaints procedure sets out how you may complain and the procedure on how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

What is a complaint?

3. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the Parish Council's actions, or lack of actions, or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service was provided by the Parish Council or a person or body acting on behalf of the Parish Council.
4. This complaints procedure applies to complaints about Parish Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Parish Council employees have dealt with your concerns.

A formal complaint can be made when you believe:

- A Parish Council service has let you down;
- We have not done something we said we would do;
- We did something wrong;
- The service we provided was unfair.

What is not a complaint?

5. This complaints procedure **does not apply** to:
 - complaints against Parish Councillors. Complaints against Parish Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Parish Council (a copy is available to download from our website). If a complaint against a Parish Councillor is received by the Parish Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of North West Leicestershire District Council.

Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Parish Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of the District Council at The Council Offices, Council Offices, Whitwick Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 3FJ.
 - services offered or provided by an authority other than the Parish Council (for example, North West Leicestershire District Council or Leicestershire County Council). We will let you know if this is the case and provide you with the contact details of these authorities.
6. The appropriate time for influencing Parish Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Parish Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Parish Clerk in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed and/or sharing your thoughts in the appropriate public participation section of Parish Council meetings.
7. If you are unhappy with a Parish Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Parish Clerk, but Standing Orders prevent the Parish Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

Procedure for dealing with your complaint.

Informal Complaints.

8. You may make your complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration to the Parish Clerk. You may do this in writing (letter or by email). Details are set out at the beginning of this document. The Parish Council will **not** accept anonymous complaints.
9. Wherever possible, the Parish Clerk will try to resolve your complaint within five working days. If this is not possible because we have to undertake further enquiries or because we have to request information from a third party then we will let you know. Please be aware that the Parish Clerk works just four hours a week so immediate replies to complaints are not possible.
10. At this point we will try to resolve your complaint on an informal level. The majority of cases will be able to be dealt with by this method. When we have investigated your complaint, we will explain to you either that:
 - we think that the Parish Council got it wrong and how we propose to put it right; or
 - we think that the Parish Council was right and why.
11. If after receiving our response you either disagree or are still unhappy, you may escalate your complaint to the next stage. At this point you should put your complaint in writing within ten working days of the receipt of our response to you and set out the reasons in detail as to why you disagree with our initial decision.

Formal Complaints.

12. Your formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Parish Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chair of the Parish Council.
13. The Parish Clerk, or if appropriate the Chairman of the Council, will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from members of the Parish Council. Receipt of your letter will be acknowledged within five working days. A meeting or phone call with you to try and resolve your complaint may be necessary at this stage.
14. You will receive a written response to your formal complaint within ten working days unless we have to undertake further enquiries or because we have to request information from a third party then we will let you know.
15. If you feel that the matter has still not been fully resolved then you may request, in writing within ten working days of the receipt of our response to you, that your complaint is referred to the full Parish Council.
16. The Parish Council will acknowledge receipt of your letter within five working days and advise you of the date of the meeting where the Parish Council will consider the matter. You will be asked for your comments, evidence, and any supporting documentation for your complaint. You will be invited to attend the meeting to address the Parish Council.
17. The Parish Clerk, or the Chair of the Parish Council, will notify you within seven working days of the meeting of the Parish Council of the outcome of your complaint and what action (if any) the

Parish Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the seven working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed).

Appeals.

18. If you wish to appeal against the decision, you must inform the Parish Council, in writing, within seven working days of the written confirmation of the decision.
19. Your appeal must state clearly the reasons that you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Parish Council. It will insufficient to simply re-state the original complaint. The appeal must set out why you consider the decision of the Parish Council is flawed or that the Parish Council had mis-directed itself in arriving at its decision.
20. Your appeal will be considered by the Parish Council. This meeting will be held no more than 20 working days from the receipt of your appeal. This meeting will normally be held in private. The Parish Council will consider all of the written evidence presented to it. You will not be called to give further verbal evidence except in exceptional circumstances.
21. If you have exhausted Osgathorpe Parish Council's complaints procedure and are not satisfied with the action taken, or believe you have been treated unfairly, then you can pursue your complaint through the Ombudsman, who provide an independent national service to investigate complaints about parish councils. Their contact details are:
 - The Local Government Ombudsman
 - T. 0300 061 0614
 - W. www.lgo.org.uk