



Barrowby Parish Council

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Grievance Policy

Document control

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- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
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- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at Staffing for formal adoption at Parish Council May 2027

1. Purpose and scope

Barrowby Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to dealing with workplace concerns fairly, consistently and without unreasonable delay. This policy sets out how employees can raise a grievance (a work-related concern, problem or complaint) and how the Council will handle it.

This procedure is intended to meet the principles of the **Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (2015)**. It should be read alongside the Council’s other employment policies).

This policy applies to all Council employees and workers. It does **not** cover complaints from members of the public about the Council’s services, members or decisions (these are dealt with under the Council’s Complaints Procedure).

2. Key principles

- Grievances will be handled promptly, sensitively and in line with the ACAS Code.
- Wherever possible, concerns will be resolved informally first.
- Employees are encouraged to raise grievances as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the concern.
- The employee will have the opportunity to explain their case before any decision is made.
- The Council will investigate as necessary, proportionately and fairly.
- At formal meetings the employee has the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union representative.
- The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome.
- No employee will be subjected to detriment or victimisation for raising a grievance in good faith.
- Confidentiality will be maintained so far as reasonably practicable.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Because the Council is a small employer, the person(s) handling a grievance may vary depending on the employee’s role and the nature of the complaint. The Council will ensure that anyone appointed is appropriately briefed, impartial and not involved in the matter complained of.

For most employees, the line manager will handle the grievance. For the Clerk/RFO, the normal arrangements are:

- **Informal stage:** Chair of the Council (or Vice-Chair if the grievance concerns the Chair).
- **Formal stage:** Staffing Committee or a Grievance Panel appointed by the Council (excluding anyone involved).
- **Appeal stage:** An Appeal Panel of different Councillors who have had no prior involvement.

4. Informal resolution

Employees should raise concerns as early as possible and, where appropriate, try to resolve them informally with their line manager. Informal discussions may be supported by a note of what was agreed. Where an informal approach is not appropriate (for example, due to the seriousness of the issue or the people involved), the employee may proceed directly to the formal stage.

5. Formal grievance procedure

5.1 Submitting a formal grievance

The employee should submit the grievance in writing to the appropriate manager/panel chair. The written grievance should include:

- a clear description of the issue(s) and relevant dates/facts;
- any relevant documents or names of witnesses (if applicable);
- the steps already taken to try to resolve the matter; and
- the outcome or resolution sought.

The Council will acknowledge receipt in writing, normally within **5 working days**.

5.2 Investigation

The Council will consider whether an investigation is needed and, if so, will appoint an investigating officer or panel member to gather information. This may include reviewing documents and interviewing the employee and any relevant witnesses. The investigation will be proportionate to the issues raised. If the grievance relates to alleged bullying, harassment or discrimination, the Council will normally investigate before any formal grievance meeting takes place.

5.3 Grievance meeting

A grievance meeting will be arranged **without unreasonable delay**. The employee will be told in advance:

- the date, time and location (or online arrangements);
- who will hear the grievance;
- their right to be accompanied; and
- any documents that will be considered.

If the employee's chosen companion cannot attend on the proposed date, the employee may suggest an alternative time, provided it is reasonable and **not more than 5 working days** after the original date. The employee (or their companion) will have the opportunity to explain the grievance and how they believe it should be resolved. The hearing officer/panel may ask questions and may adjourn the meeting if further investigation is needed.

A written record will be kept. Where practicable, the Council will share notes with the employee after the meeting.

5.4 Outcome

The Council will confirm its decision in writing, normally within **10 working days** of the grievance meeting (or as soon as reasonably practicable if further investigation is required). The outcome letter will set out:

- the decision and the reasons for it;
- any actions the Council will take (and timescales); and
- the employee's right to appeal and how to do so.

6. Appeal

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing, stating the grounds of appeal (for example, new evidence, procedural concerns or an unreasonable decision). The appeal should be submitted normally within **10 working days** of receiving the outcome.

An Appeal Panel (with no previous involvement) will hear the appeal without unreasonable delay. The employee has the right to be accompanied. The Appeal Panel may uphold the original decision, amend it, or substitute a new decision. The appeal decision will be confirmed in writing and will be final within the Council's procedure.

7. Special circumstances

7.1 Grievances involving councillors

Employees may raise grievances about the actions or behaviour of individual councillors where this affects their work. The Council will manage such matters sensitively, recognising that councillors are not employees. Where the issues raised suggest a potential breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, the Council may also consider referral to the Monitoring Officer/Standards process, alongside any workplace resolution steps.

7.2 Grievances raised during disciplinary action

If an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, the Council will consider whether the disciplinary should be temporarily paused while the grievance is addressed. In some cases it may be appropriate to run the processes in parallel, taking specialist advice where needed.

7.3 Mediation

Where appropriate and with the agreement of all parties, the Council may suggest mediation as a way to help resolve the grievance.

8. Right to be accompanied

The employee may make a reasonable request to be accompanied at a formal grievance meeting or appeal hearing by either:

- a trade union representative (certified, if applicable); or
- a fellow worker.

The companion may address the meeting, put and sum up the employee's case, respond on the employee's behalf to views expressed and confer with the employee during the meeting. The companion may not answer questions on the employee's behalf if the employee does not wish it, or prevent the Council from explaining its position.

9. Confidentiality, records and data protection

All parties are expected to maintain confidentiality, so far as reasonably practicable. Information will be shared only with those who need it to progress the matter.

The Council will keep written records of the grievance, meetings, decisions and any appeal. Records will be stored securely and retained in line with the Council's retention schedule and the requirements of the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Records will normally be retained in accordance with the Council's records retention schedule.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.