



Broomfield Parish Council

Complaints Procedure (including Data Protection complaints)

Broomfield Parish Council (the Council) is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

General Complaints

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to

1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
2. complaints against Councillors. Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council and, if a complaint against a Councillor is received by the council, you will be directed to complain to the Monitoring Officer of Chelmsford City Council.

Data Protection Complaints

This part of the procedure applies to complaints about infringement of data protection legislation. This may be because of the way the parish council has handled personal information, for example

- the way we have responded to your subject access request (SAR)
- security measures we have used to store information and impacts of a data breach
- how we have collected or used personal information.

Submission of the Complaint

1. The person making the complaint (the Complainant) should set out full details of the complaint in writing and send it to the Parish Clerk. The definition of 'in writing' includes a hard copy letter or an email to an official email address of the Parish Clerk (clerk@broomfield-pc.gov.uk). Please note that no other form of communication will be compliant with this policy and in particular communication via social media channels will not be accepted as a formal complaint.
2. In the event that the Complaint does not wish to address the complaint to the Parish Clerk it shall be sent to the Chair of the Council. The complaint shall be acknowledged within 5 working days.
3. In the event of a complaint relating to data protection, the complainant will need to provide proof of ID to ensure that there is no potential of a data breach. If you are acting on behalf of another person, we will need to see evidence that you have the right to act, for example
 - an appropriate power of attorney
 - a signed letter of authority from the person you are acting on behalf of

4. Once received, the Parish Clerk will confirm receipt of your complaint within 10 working days.

Informal resolution

5. In many cases the Parish Clerk or Chair (whomever shall have received the complaint) will investigate the issue and provide a written response to the complaint and such response will be provided within 20 working days. If you are dissatisfied with the response, you may ask for it to be considered formally.

Formal Complaints

6. In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the informal investigation or in cases where the Parish Clerk or Chair consider the allegations to be particularly serious, complex or sensitive thus precluding an informal investigation, the complaint will be referred to the Council for formal consideration. The Complainant will be advised of the date of the Council meeting when the Council will consider their complaint.
7. All formal complaints will be heard at a Full Council meeting, which if practicable, will be the next meeting after receipt of the complaint, or after the Complainant has expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of an informal complaint investigation.
8. The Complainant shall be invited to attend the meeting and may bring a representative if they wish. The Complainant shall also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential.
9. The Complainant shall provide to the Council copies of all documentation and evidence upon which they may wish to rely upon no later than seven days prior to the meeting when the complaint is to be considered.

At the Meeting

10. The Council shall decide whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision in relation to a complaint will be announced at the meeting in public.
11. If the Chair has informally investigated the complaint, the Vice Chair shall chair this agenda item in the meeting.
12. The Chair will introduce all parties and explain the Council's complaints handling procedure.
13. The Complainant or their representative will be asked to outline the grounds for complaint. Thereafter Councillors may ask questions of the Complainant.
14. The Parish Clerk or, in the case that the complaint relates to the Parish Clerk, another nominated officer or Councillor shall explain the position of the Council. Thereafter the Complainant together with Councillors may ask further questions.
15. First the Parish Clerk, and then the Complainant, shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
16. Both the Parish Clerk and the Complainant shall be asked to leave the room whilst the Council decides whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If any point of clarification is required both parties shall be invited back into the room.
17. Both the Parish Clerk and the Complainant shall be invited to return to the meeting to hear either the formal decision that has been made by the Council or if a decision cannot be finalised at that meeting to be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the meeting

18. The final decision, together with details of any action to be taken, shall be confirmed in writing within seven working days. There is no right of appeal.

This Policy was agreed and adopted by the Council at its meeting in June 2026.