

NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy and Procedure

A policy for dealing with complaints about the Parish Council, its staff or Members

Adopted January 2026

1. Newenden Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in the village of Newenden, Kent and any visitors. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from Newenden Parish Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. This Complaint Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - 3.1 complaints by one council employee against another employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer.
 - 3.2 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, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Ashford Borough Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Ashford Borough Council.
 - 3.3 complaints determined by Newenden Parish Council to be vexatious¹
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your views or any concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which an item is to be discussed. Meeting agendas are published at least three clear days before a meeting and every meeting includes public time which is an opportunity to raise your concerns verbally in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the 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.
5. You should make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The address and phone numbers are set out below. The more information you can provide to evidence your concerns the quicker the Council can investigate and respond. If you would like to raise a complaint in person, please do so by speaking to the Clerk immediately before or after any Council meeting held at St Peters church, Newenden. The Clerk may ask you to put your concerns in writing, but the initial discussion will be noted on the Clerk's return to the office. For the safety and wellbeing of employees, in person complaints should not be made at the Council's registered office or anywhere else.
6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and work to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

¹ A vexatious complaint is one raised specifically to cause harassment, annoyance, frustration, worry or financial cost to the Council, brought without sufficient grounds for investigation or resolution.

7. If you do not want to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council.
8. Unless subject to the complaint, the Clerk will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from other employees or members of the Council. If the complaint is about the Clerk it will be handled by the Chairman and two other Councillors.
9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.
10. If you are dissatisfied with the Council's response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full Council and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.
11. If you are still dissatisfied after the full Council has considered your complaint you should escalate your complaint to Ashford Borough Council or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman² if applicable.

Contact:

Clerk to Newenden Parish Council

c/o Carpens

Hobbs Lane

Beckley

TN31 6TT

Enquiries@Newenden-PC.gov.uk

Telephone: 01797 260364 / 07980 517235

² [Town and parish councils - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)