

Bredhurst Parish Council

Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy



Adopted: June 2026

Next Review: June 2028

1. Purpose

Bredhurst Parish Council is committed to providing high quality services to residents and visitors. The Council welcomes compliments, comments, suggestions and complaints as valuable feedback that can help improve services and procedures.

This policy explains:

- how compliments, comments and complaints can be made;
- how they will be handled;
- the timescales involved;
- what to do if a complainant remains dissatisfied.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish Council services;
- decisions or actions of the Council;
- conduct by Council staff;
- administrative procedures.

This policy does not apply to:

- complaints about individual councillors (these are dealt with under the Councillor Code of Conduct through the Monitoring Officer at the principal authority);
- complaints regarding employee disciplinary matters;
- matters subject to legal proceedings;
- Freedom of Information or Data Protection requests;
- decisions where there is a legal right of appeal;
- complaints about third parties or other organisations.

3. Compliments and Comments

The Council welcomes positive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Compliments and comments may be submitted:

- by email;
- in writing;
- via the Council website;
- or directly to the Parish Clerk.

Compliments may be shared with councillors or staff unless confidentiality is requested.

4. Making a Complaint

Complaints should normally be made in writing to the Parish Clerk.

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Clerk to Bredhurst Parish Council
Camellia, Dunn Street Road, Bredhurst, Kent ME7 3NB
clerk@bredhurst-pc.gov.uk
07966425693

The complaint should include:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- details of the complaint;
- relevant dates or documents;
- what outcome is sought.

Anonymous complaints will normally not be investigated unless there is a significant public interest concern.

5. Informal Resolution

The Council will try to resolve concerns informally and quickly wherever possible.

Many issues can be resolved through:

- explanation;
- clarification;
- corrective action;
- discussion with the Clerk or Chair.

6. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Initial Complaint

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.

The complaint will normally be investigated and a written response provided within 20 working days.

If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of:

- the reason for delay; and
- the revised response date.

Where the complaint concerns the Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Council.

Stage 2 – Review by the Council

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request that the complaint be reviewed by the Council.

The request for review should be made within 20 working days of the Stage 1 response.

The Council may:

- review written evidence;
- invite the complainant to attend a meeting;
- seek additional information;
- or appoint a panel to review the complaint.

The complainant will normally receive a written outcome within 20 working days of the review meeting.

The decision of the Council at this stage is final.

7. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Council may refuse to pursue a complaint where it is considered:

- abusive;
- persistent;
- repetitive;
- unreasonable; or
- vexatious.

Any such decision will be made by the Council and recorded appropriately.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints will be handled sensitively and in accordance with:

- the Data Protection Act 2018; and
- UK GDPR requirements.

Information will only be shared where necessary to investigate the complaint.

9. Record Keeping

The Clerk will maintain a record of:

- complaints received;
- actions taken;
- outcomes;
- and lessons learned.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Council's document retention policy.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required by legislation or operational needs.