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WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD – PARISH UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2026

Elections

We now have clarity that the following elections will go ahead on Thursday 7 May 2026: Hampshire County Council elections for all Divisions, including Meon Valley and Bishops Waltham; Winchester City Council elections for the 1/3rd of Ward seats that would normally fall vacant in the first year of the 'standard' three-year cycle – ie one seat in Upper Meon Valley Ward. The County Councillors elected this coming May will likely serve a maximum of 2 years. There will be elections in May 2027 for members of the new unitary authorities, initially serving in a 'shadow' authority until the new Councils go 'live' in May 2028. The following elections to the unitary authorities will be in May 2031. On current plans, the first Hampshire Solent Mayor will be elected for a 4-year term in May 2028, with the following election being in May 2032

The important point for Parish Councils is that if their electoral cycle does not match that of the new unitary authorities or the Mayor then, if their elections are contested, they will need to foot the bill for the expense of running an election in an 'off year'. As New Alresford Town Council found last year, the cost of even a by-election can run well into four figures. We have yet to see what options might be available for aligning the cycles to prevent this. Meanwhile, we still wait to hear from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government their preferred solution for the establishment of Unitary Authorities in Hampshire Solent.

Planning – Provision of a 5-year supply of sites for Gypsy and Traveller Communities

Both Winchester City and the South Downs Planning Authorities are currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of these sites, as required by central government. The result of this is that applications for new Gypsy and Traveller sites on what would otherwise be classed as 'countryside' are increasingly being recommended for approval, since refusal would likely lead to a successful appeal through the so-called 'tilted balance' principle, where a need has to be weighed against environmental considerations. Identification of new candidate sites to satisfy the 5 year supply is therefore now being given some greater priority by both Local Planning Authorities.

South Downs Plans

The new South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan is now live on the website here:

<https://partnership-management-plan.southdowns.gov.uk>

It is an ambitious plan and will require the active input of partner authorities, statutory bodies, organisations and, above all, communities throughout the park to ensure success. It is well worth a read and is likely to be the focus of the next Parish engagement event.

Meanwhile, the Reg 19 draft of the South Downs Local Plan Review will be published with the papers for the 12th February convening of the South Downs Planning Committee, and be put before the Full Authority meeting on 19th March. The formal Reg 19 consultation will commence in early May, with the Inspection in Public likely to take place in the second half of the year.

Food Waste Collection

The roll-out of the Food Waste Collection programme is nearly complete and has not been without a few minor teething troubles – unsurprising given that it requires a new fleet of vehicles and many new operators to work. We are following up some of the localised issues but would emphasise to all that the larger, kerb-side grey bins should be left out for collection with their handles in the LOCKED position.

Neil Bolton
Jerry Pett

2 February 2026

MEETING REPORT: Annual Parish Assembly

DATE: 9th February 2026

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 135

Each year, the parish must hold a meeting for the electors of the parish. This must be held between 1st March and 1st June (inclusive) every year after 6pm. In an election year this must be held between 4 and 14 days after the election. It is a meeting for the parish council to report to the electorate on their accomplishments over the past year. Unlike an ordinary council meeting, the public notice and agenda for the meeting must be published seven clear days in advance of the meeting.

We have in the past few years had low attendance at the meeting. This year we need to think of an innovative idea to raise attendance. Below are possible ideas:

Keynote speaker:

Is there anyone we could invite that has an interesting subject that is pertinent to the village?

Community/ Volunteer Groups:

The Parish Council could invite local groups to come along and either have a tabletop display where they can promote their group and sign-up new volunteers, or we could invite them to do a short talk about their organisation and what it does in the parish.

Community awards:

The parish council could recognise community heroes, and the annual parish meeting could be a great opportunity to applaud those who are carrying out voluntary roles in the parish who would otherwise go unrecognised.

Local school/group:

The Parish Council could invite the local primary school, community choir, bellringers and do a short performance at the start of the meeting. This encourages parents/friends to attend.

MEETING REPORT: Entrance Gates

DATE: 9th February 26

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 137 (c)

At the last meeting the below was discussed but no vote was taken as it was decided to wait until all councillors were present.

I did ask Hampshire if bollards were a via option but I have not received a reply yet.

Dear Juanita,

From your suggested locations (photos below):

Longwood Road



Whaddon Lane



I did manage to visit the sites and assess the suitability of these locations for new gateway fencing and would make the following comments.

We would only be able to provide a single gateway fencing unit in the nearside verge at each of the two locations as there is very limited room in the offside verges to provide two entrance gates.

The **Location 1** (photo below) we would need to manufacture a bespoke (angled) unit due to the verge embankment slope. I would need to speak with the gateway manufacturer quite early in the process to make sure this is feasible from a manufacturing perspective.

I would also recommend that we relocate the road narrows warning sign from the nearside verge and located it below the 30mph sign in the opposite verge. This will give us more room beneath the existing signing for the new gateway feature.

LOCATION 1



At **Location 2** (photo below) I would suggest that we locate a single gateway fencing unit in the nearside verge and incorporate a re-manufactured village sign similar to the existing one shown in the photo which can be attached to new fencing unit.

I would recommend that the new unit be located approximately 15m prior (this side) of the existing telegraph pole which you can see in the photo. This being a slightly different location from where you initially suggested.

LOCATION 2



Both gateway fencing units would be 1.5m in width and I would aim for them to be approximately 1.5m in height too.

I appreciate it's not the 2 sets of units as you had initially requested, but this is due to the lack of available space on site.

In terms of costing the scheme, the overall costing which I have yet to calculate in detail would likely be as follows: The two gateway fencing units + new sign would be approximately £5,000 + our application fee is £850, our design/implementation fees would be approximately £2,000 on top of this.

This would give a overall scheme total of approximately **£7,850.00**.

I hope this helps to at least give you a good starting point for the scheme and I look forward to hearing your thoughts in due course.

If you are happy to proceed then we can start by completing the CFI application form. Once this has been completed and the proposed measures approved by the Parish then I would invoice you £850 for our application fee. Upon receipt of the fee payment, I would then be able to proceed with preparing a suitable design plan for you to approve.

Owslebury Parish Council
2025/26

PAYMENTS	Amount (£)	Payee	Payment Type
178	913.53	Swanmore PC	YM/PS
179	1,000.00	St Andrews Grant for Church Yard	YM/PS
180	7.63	3 Phone	DD
181	3.60	IONOS - Managed Word Press	DD
182	46.20	SLCC - Training	
183	46.20	SLCC - Training	
184	4.25	Bank Charges	DD
185	90.00	Sentry Storage	
186	1,564.74	TTS - Wedny House	
187	6.00	IONOS - Wordpress Hosting	DD
188	135.78	Phil Space - Toilet	
189	90.00	Parish Online	
190	559.00	Clerks Salary	SO
191	182.07	HMRC	
192	29.01	OPHMC - Meeting Expense	
193	49.00	Amazon - Printer	CC
194	195.00	WCC - Dog Bins - Q3	
195	273.00	EM Arts	
196	25.00	Ben Leach - PAT Test	

Voucher	Amount (£)	Payee
RECEIPTS		
34	2.23	Cashback Credit Card
35	149.27	CCLA Interest
36	442.00	Ecclesiastical - Insurance for stolen toilet
37	50.00	Xmas Lights - Donation
38	50.00	Xmas Lights - Donation
39	50.00	Xmas Lights - Donation
40	100.00	Xmas Lights - Donation
41	250.00	Xmas Lights - Donation
42	3,620.99	VAT Return

Chairman:

Date:

RFO:

Date:

Bank and short term deposit balances/bank reconciliaton

1. BANK BALANCES

31/01/2026

CASH BOOK BALANCE		£	£
	Balances 1st April 2025		62,981.59
	income		57,089.69
	expenses		-66,342.15
			53,729.13
	add o/s payment		3,298.63
	Less OPHMC Credit note		
	less o/s receipts		
	Control total		57,027.76
BANK STATEMENTS			
	Treasurers account	57,027.76	
	Business 30 Day notice	0.00	
	Business Instant access	0.00	
	Per bank statements		57,027.76
	Difference		-0.00

2. SHORT TERM DEPOSIT

CCLA	45,000.00
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3. TOTAL OF BANK AND SHORT TERM DEPOSITS

98,729.13

MEETING REPORT: Consultation
DATE: 9th February 2026
WRITTEN BY: The Clerk
AGENDA ITEM: 140 (c)

Winchester City Council is currently reviewing its Statement of Licensing Policy with respect to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Private Hire Operators. Please complete the following survey to share your views: [Consultation on the review of Winchester City Council's Taxi & Private Hire Policy – Fill in form](#).

A copy of the draft Policy document can be found at [Statement of Licensing Policy and Fees - Winchester City Council](#).

The consultation will close at midnight Thursday 19 February 2026.

Once the consultation has closed, the responses and draft Policy will be considered by the Council's Licensing and Regulation Committee.



GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Adopted by the Council on 13 February 2023

Reviewed on 12 February 2024

Reviewed on 10 February 2025

Reviewed on 9 February 2026



DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all council employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct whilst at work or representing the council. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all. This procedure is prepared in accordance with the dismissal and dispute resolution procedures as set out in the Employment Act 2008 and the ACAS Code of Practice APR 2009.

PRINCIPLES

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated. At every stage in the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against them and will be given the opportunity to state their case before any decision is made.

At all formal stages the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, friend or work colleague during the disciplinary interview.

No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct when the penalty of dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice may be applied.

An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.

The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

THE PROCEDURE FOR MISCONDUCT and GROSS MISCONDUCT

The following list provides examples of misconduct which will normally give rise to formal disciplinary action:

- Unauthorised absence from work
- Persistent short-term and/or frequent absences from work without a medical reason
- Lateness for work or poor time keeping
- Inappropriate standard of dress
- Minor breaches of Health and Safety or other Society rules or procedures
- Failure to perform your job to the standard expected or in line with your job description/objectives
- Time wasting
- Disruptive behaviour
- Misuse of the council's facilities
- Refusal to carry out reasonable requests or instructions
- Failure to follow an agreed council Procedure

This list is not exhaustive and offences of a similar nature will result in disciplinary action being instigated.

The following list provides examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, or other acts of dishonesty
- Fighting, assault on another person
- Deliberate damage to property of the council, its workers or members
- Gross incompetence in the conduct of work
- Gross negligence which results in the council or employees being put at risk.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or excessive alcohol



- Acts of incitement towards or actual acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation including on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Serious acts of insubordination
- Serious breach of duty to keep information of the council, its service providers and its clients confidential
- Unauthorised entry to computer records
- Serious breach of the council's, Health & Safety Policy
- Any action, whether committed on or off the premises, that is likely to or does bring the council into disrepute
- Serious negligence which causes or might cause significant loss, damage or injury
- Accepting bribes or incentive payments from suppliers
- Unauthorised use of Society funds or credit
- Working with an external agency to provide information which would be detrimental to and cause commercial risk to the council.

This list is not exhaustive and other offences of a similar gravity will result in disciplinary action being instigated at Gross Misconduct level which carries a potential penalty of dismissal. Gross Misconduct is generally any conduct which places extreme pressure on the mutual trust which exists in an employment relationship.

INFORMAL ACTION

Minor misconduct will be dealt with informally usually in a confidential one-to-one meeting between the employee and line manager. In the case of the Clerk being the individual against whom there is a complaint or allegation the matter should be handled discreetly by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and involve an informal meeting initially. However, where the matter is more serious or informal action has not brought about the necessary improvement the following procedure will be used:

FORMAL ACTION

The level of warning you may receive for misconduct/gross misconduct will depend on how serious the council considers the alleged actions to be and your previous conduct in all the circumstances. In the event of alleged gross ~~misconduct~~misconduct, the formal process may commence at Stage 4 – [see 3.4 below](#).

Disciplinary Letters

If there is a concern about an employee's conduct or behaviour, then a letter will be given to the employee advising them of the allegation(s) and reasons why this is unacceptable. The letter should invite the employee to attend a meeting at which the alleged misconduct will be discussed and will inform the employee of their right to be accompanied to the meeting. The letter will specify at which stage the disciplinary procedure is being invoked (see 4 stages below) and if invoked at Stage 4 for Gross Misconduct the letter will warn that a potential outcome could be dismissal. The time, date and venue of the meeting will also be advised. Any documents to be produced at the meeting will also be provided.

Disciplinary Meetings

The time and location of a disciplinary meeting should be agreed with the ~~employee~~employee, and it should be held in a private location with no interruptions. This will normally be without undue delay but allowing the employee to prepare their case e.g. within 5 days of the letter being sent, where



practically possible. At the meeting the manager (or in the case of the Clerk being disciplined, the Chairman) will state the complaint against the employee and go through the evidence which has been gathered. The employee will also be allowed to ask questions, present evidence and call witnesses if advance notice has been given that they will do so.

If the employee is unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseeable reasons out of their control (e.g. illness) then the council will reasonably rearrange the meeting. However, if the employee fails to attend the meeting without good reason the meeting can be held in the employee's absence.

OUTCOMES AND PENALTIES

Stage 1 - Oral Warning

In the instance of a first complaint that conduct does not meet acceptable standards, the employee will normally be given a formal ORAL WARNING. They will be advised of;

- the reason for the warning,
- that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure,
- the improvement that is required and the timescales for achieving this improvement,
- together with a review date and any support available (where applicable) and
- their right of appeal.

A brief note of the oral warning will be kept but it will be spent after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct.

Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the offence is a serious one, or if further to previous formal disciplinary action, a WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee by the Line Manager. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept on file but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct.

Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

If there is still a failure to improve and conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, or the misconduct is sufficiently serious, a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will normally be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept by the Line Manager (or in the case of the Clerk being disciplined by the Chairman) but it will be spent after 12 months (in exceptional cases the period may be longer) subject to satisfactory conduct.

Stage 4 – Dismissal or other sanctions

If conduct is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards, or where the Society reasonably believes Gross Misconduct has occurred, DISMISSAL may result. Only the appropriately convened hearing panel can take the decision to dismiss an employee. The employee will be given a written statement of allegations against them, invited to a meeting and then be notified in writing of the reasons for the decision taken at the hearing. Penalties at this stage may include dismissal with notice or summary dismissal (i.e. without any notice), Final Written Warning with/without demotion, loss of pay or loss of seniority. If dismissal is the outcome, the employee will



be advised of the date on which employment will terminate. In all cases the employee has a right of appeal.

Very exceptionally, if an offence of Gross Misconduct is extremely serious an employee can be dismissed immediately without a meeting. In this situation a letter setting out reasons for dismissal would be sent to the employee offering the opportunity for an appeal hearing.

SUSPENSION

If you are accused of an act of gross misconduct, you may be suspended from work on full pay while the council investigates the alleged offence. Only the appropriately convened committee has the power to suspend. This enables a swift and thorough investigation to occur. Whilst suspended pending disciplinary investigation regular contact with a nominated person at the council will be maintained although access to premises, equipment or systems may be denied. The Investigator who compiles evidence for the disciplinary hearing must play no part in the subsequent decision-making to ensure impartiality. Councils need to consider the implications of such arrangements on its hearing and appeal panel plans early on in the disciplinary process.

APPEALS

The Appeals stage of the disciplinary process is part of the Code of Practice to which an employee has a right. It can be exercised after any of the stages of disciplinary action for Misconduct/Poor Performance or Gross Misconduct.

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should inform the Chairman within five working days, in writing and giving reasons for the appeal. An Appeal may be raised if:

- The employee thinks the finding or penalty is unfair
- New evidence has come to light
- The employee thinks that the procedure was not applied properly.

Where possible the Appeal will be heard by a separate panel of elected members who have not been involved in the original disciplinary hearing, who will view the evidence with impartiality. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or accredited Trade Union official or lay member at the appeal hearing. The outcome of the appeal and reasons for it will be advised to the employee as soon as possible after the meeting and be confirmed in writing. At the Appeal hearing any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased. The decision taken at the Appeal hearing will be final.

THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

At each formal stage of disciplinary interview an employee has the right to be accompanied and can make a reasonable request for such a person to accompany them. An employee can ask any other employee or a trade union representative or an appropriately accredited official employed by a trade union to accompany them, to give support and help them prepare for the disciplinary interview. This right is enshrined in the 1999 Employment Relations Act. As this is an internal process there is no provision to have any external person accompany or represent an employee e.g. partner, parent, solicitor etc. The companion can address the hearing, put and sum up the employee's case, respond on behalf of the worker to any views expressed at the meeting, confer with the employee. The companion cannot however answer questions on the employee's behalf or address the hearing if the employee does not wish them to or prevent the employee explaining their case.

HEARING PANELS



The SLCC advise that councils establish hearing panels to hear disciplinary and grievance hearings on an annual basis so that if a dispute does arise in the workplace the elected members involved are already trained and briefed on their duties as a hearing or appeal panel member. In situations where individual members are implicated in the dispute or have undertaken an investigatory role then they will need to be substituted as panel members.

NOTE-TAKING

It is highly recommended that a note-taker be provided to every meeting/hearing which arises as a result of a disciplinary process as Employment Tribunals are particularly keen to view contemporaneous notes of events which have led to an employment dispute. Councils will need to give this requirement careful consideration in order to respect employee confidentiality.

GRIEVANCES RAISED DURING DISCIPLINARIES

In some circumstances when a disciplinary process has commenced an employee chooses to exercise their right to raise an internal grievance about the employment relationship with the council or individual Members. The SLCC recommends, in line with ACAS advice, that disciplinary matters are placed on hold until grievances have been aired and actions towards a resolution have been progressed. In exceptional circumstances it is pragmatic to deal with the two disputes concurrently but SLCC would advise caution and specialist advice should be sought if this arises.

CRIMINAL CHARGES OR CONVICTIONS

If an employee is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence this does not automatically give rise to a disciplinary situation. Consideration needs to be given to how a charge or conviction may affect an employee's ability to undertake his or her job duties and their relationships with the employer, colleagues, subordinates or customers.

GETTING IT WRONG

Failure to follow the ACAS Code of Practice (available at www.acas.org.uk) can lead to an Employment Tribunal awarding an uplift of an award against the council of up to 25%. Tribunals dealing with unfair dismissal claims are particularly interested in whether the employer followed a procedure and whether the employer acted fairly and reasonably. One way in which to avoid such a penalty is to have an agreed procedure, communicate that procedure to staff and Members, revisit and review the procedure regularly and have some training for those who are expected to operate the procedure.



GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. This policy is based on and complies with the ACAS Code of Practice 2015. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act.
2. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.
3. This policy confirms:
 - employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for their grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date.
 - any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council.
 - an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final.
 - information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
 - recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
 - if an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure.
 - if a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they raised the grievance in good faith.
 - the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication



breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties.

- employees can use all stages of the grievance procedure if the complaint is not a Code of Conduct complaint about a Councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the Council's grievance procedure (paragraph 4) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a Councillor. Employees cannot use the formal stages of the Council's grievance procedure for a Code of Conduct complaint about a Councillor. If the complaint about a Councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the Disciplinary and Grievance Monitoring Officer of Winchester City Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the Code of Conduct. If it does not concern the Code of Conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- if the grievance is a Code of Conduct Complaint against a Councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the Council's Grievance Procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the Council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and Councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination.
- if an employee considers that the grievance concerns their safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a Councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with their line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The Council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example Health and Safety Policy or Dignity at Work Policy) and in accordance with the Code of Conduct regime.

Informal grievance procedure

4. The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with their manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with their manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chairman. If the employee's complaint is about a Councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that Councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the Councillor's consent.

Formal grievance procedure

5. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a Code of Conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman.
6. The Council will appoint a sub-committee of three members to investigate the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.



Investigation

7. If the sub-committee decides that it is appropriate (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an Investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, Councillors or members of the public).
8. The Investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the sub-committee

Notification

9. Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:
 - the names of its Chairman and other members.
 - the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be held within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance.
 - the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or trade union official.
 - a copy of the Council's grievance policy.
 - confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting.
 - confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice.
 - findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation.
 - an invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example, where a person has a health condition).

The grievance meeting

10. At the grievance meeting:
 - the Chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee.
 - the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence.
 - the Chairman will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action he/she wants the Council to take.
 - any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness.
 - the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case.
 - a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.
11. The Chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, usually within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the



employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

The appeal

12. If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the subcommittee, they may submit a written appeal to the Council. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the subcommittee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.
13. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:
 - a failure by the Council to follow its grievance procedure.
 - the decision was not supported by the evidence.
 - the action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate
 - new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
 -
14. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Council who have not previously been involved in the case. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.
15. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
16. At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:
 - introduce the panel members to the employee.
 - explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the sub-committee.
 - explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
17. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of his/her appeal.
18. The Chairman will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
19. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the sub-committee or substitute its own decision.
20. The decision of the appeal panel is final.



Policy to be reviewed: February ~~2026~~2027



FILMING AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS HELD IN PUBLIC

Adopted 14 November 2022
Reviewed 11 December 2023
Reviewed 9 February 2026



Owslebury Parish Council supports the principle of openness and transparency in the way it conducts its meetings. Sound recording, photographing, filming, and use of social media at meetings which are held in public is permitted:

- subject to the provisions of this Policy; and
- provided that the Chairman is satisfied that it will not be disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting.

The Chair will advise if any or all of a meeting will be recorded or filmed at the start of the meeting. It is Owslebury Parish Councils intention to record all meetings of the Full Council and any committee meetings.

Although not required to do so, anyone intending to record a meeting of the Parish Council is encouraged to contact the Clerk via email at owsleburyparishcouncil@gmail.com - clerk@owslebury-pc.gov.uk in advance of the meeting for advice and guidance. Reasonable advance notice will enable practical arrangements to be made and special requirements to be discussed.

It should be noted that the Chair of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any recording and/or reporting if, in their opinion, it is distracting or otherwise disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Disruptive behaviour includes any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting or impedes others from being able to see, hear or film the proceedings, for example:

- Excessive noise in recording or re-siting equipment during the debate/discussion,
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography,
- Moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public without the consent of the Chair; or
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

Termination or suspension of recording might also occur in other circumstances, for example, where:

- The meeting is suspended; or
- The meeting agrees formally to exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential/exempt nature of the business being discussed

Owslebury Parish Council expects those recording proceedings not to edit the film/audio/photo recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or infringe the core values of the Parish Council. This includes refraining from editing any record in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being filmed, recorded or photographed.

The use of flash photography will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.



At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair will make an announcement that the meeting will be recorded. Meeting agendas will also carry this message.

Members of the public attending a meeting to ask a question will be deemed to have given consent to being photographed, filmed or recorded.

Members of the public seated in the public seating area who do not wish to be filmed must move out of sight of the filming device.

Letters or emails to applicants, on planning applications regarding when the application will be heard will state that the meeting will be recorded. In this way all attendees will be aware that proceedings are recorded.

Recordings of Owslebury Parish Council meetings by those other than the Owslebury Parish Council are the responsibility of the person making the recording in whatever form, and any breaches of the law which may result are similarly their responsibility. Owslebury Parish Council accepts no liability whatsoever for such breaches.

Dealing with Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints Policy

Adopted by the Parish Council on 26 July 2021

Reviewed 13 February 2023

Reviewed 12 February 2024

Reviewed 10 February 2025

[Reviewed 9 February 2026](#)

1. Introduction

1.1 Dealing with a complaint is a straightforward process but in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the council. This can happen either while their complaint is being investigated, or once the council has finished dealing with the complaint.

1.2 Owslebury Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints equitably, comprehensively, and in a timely manner.

1.3 We will not normally limit the contact which complainants have with council staff or offices.

1.4 We do not expect Councillors or staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour, which is abusive, offensive or threatening and may include:

- Using abusive or foul language on the telephone, face-to-face, by letter, Fax, email, text, social media
- Any form of intimidating or threatening behaviour
- Sending multiple emails
- Leaving multiple voicemails

1.5 We will take action to protect staff and Councillors from such behaviour. If a complainant behaves in a way that is unreasonably persistent or vexatious, we will follow this policy.

1.6 Raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses, for example if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to the complaint being regarded as vexatious.

1.7 Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause them to be labelled unreasonably persistent.

2. Aim of this policy

2.1 The aim of this policy is to contribute to our overall aim of dealing with all complaints in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

2.2 It sets out how the Parish Council will decide which complaints will be treated as vexatious or unreasonably persistent, and what the Parish Council will do in those circumstances. The policy is for the information of staff, Councillors and residents.

3. Definitions

3.1 We have adopted the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) definition of "unreasonable complainant behaviour" and "unreasonable persistent complaints"

3.2 We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints as those which, because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contacts with the council, hinder the Parish Councils consideration of their or other people's complaints. The description 'unreasonably persistent' and 'vexatious' may apply separately or jointly to a particular complaint.



OWSLEBURY & MORESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

3.3 Examples include the way or frequency that complainants raise their complaint with staff, or how complainants respond when informed of the Parish Councils decision about the complaint.

3.4 Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint include the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the complaint and the person making it will be considered as being in this category):

- there are insufficient or no grounds for the complaint and it is made only to annoy (or for reasons that the complainant does not admit or make obvious)
- there are no specified grounds for the complaint
- the complainant refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- the complaint is about issues not within the power of the Parish Council to investigate, change or influence (examples could be a complaint about a private car park, or something that is the responsibility of another organisation) and where the complainant refuses to accept this
- the complainant insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice (insisting, for instance, that there must not be any written record of the complaint or insisting the complaint is only dealt with by the Chair)
- there appears to be groundless complaints about the staff or Councillors dealing with the complaints, and an attempt to have them dismissed or replaced
- there is an unreasonable number of contacts with the Parish Council, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or complaints
- there are persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes, telephone calls, texts, emails, etc)
- attempts to harass, verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff or Councillors dealing with their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or by the use of offensive or discriminatory language
- subsidiary or new issues are raised whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process
- trivial or irrelevant new information is introduced whilst the complaint is being investigated and an expectation that this to be taken into account and commented on
- there is a change to the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed
- the complainant denies statements they made at an earlier stage in the complaint process
- the complainant electronically records meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of others involved
- the complaint is the subject of an excessively "scattergun" approach; for instance, the complaint is not only submitted to the council, but at the same time to a Member of Parliament, other councils, elected councillors of this and other councils, the council's independent auditor, the Monitoring Officer, the police, solicitors, and/or the Local Government Ombudsman or local groups in the village
- the complainant refuses to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given



- the same complaint is made repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints procedure has been concluded and where the complainant insists that the minor differences make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure
- the complaint remains "active" through the complainant persisting in seeking an outcome which we have explained is unrealistic for legal, policy or other valid reasons
- documented evidence is not accepted as factual by the complainant
- the complaint relates to an issue based on a historic and irreversible decision or incident
- the complaint combines some or all of these features

4. Imposing restrictions

4.1 The Parish Council will ensure that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly according to the complaints procedure.

4.2 In the first instance the Clerk investigating the complaint will consult with their Chair or the Vice Chair in their absence, prior to issuing a warning to the complainant. The Clerk will contact the complainant either in writing or by email to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour. The Clerk will explain the actions that the Parish Council may take if the behaviour does not change.

4.3 If the disruptive behaviour continues, an extraordinary meeting will be convened to discuss the case and the complainants behaviour. The Clerk will issue a letter or email to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the Parish Council in future will be restricted. The Clerk will inform the complainant in writing of what procedures have been put in place and for what period, either in this letter or a subsequent letter or email. The Clerk can consult with the Monitoring Officer, HALC, SLCC or other member of the Parish Council's legal team if they so wish.

4.4 Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with the Parish Council will be appropriate and proportionate, and the complainant will be advised of the period of time the restriction will be in place for. In most cases restrictions will apply for between three and six months but in exceptional cases may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

4.5 Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the complainant and may include:

- Banning the complainant from making contact by telephone except through a third party e.g. solicitor/councillor/friend acting on their behalf
- Banning the complainant from sending emails to individual Councillors and/or all council officers and insisting they only correspond by letter
- Requiring contact to take place with the Clerk only
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days / times / duration
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Letting the complainant know that the Parish Council will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated member of staff will be identified who will read future correspondence)

- Informing the complainant that any further complaints from them will only be considered if a Clerk agrees that it warrants investigation

4.6 When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a complainant, the Clerk will contact the complainant in writing to explain:

- why the Parish Council has taken the decision,
- what action the Parish Council is taking,
- the duration of that action,
- the review process of this policy, and the right of the complainant to contact the Local Government Ombudsman about the fact that their complaint has been treated as a vexatious/persistent.

4.7 The Clerk will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter or email to the complainant.

4.8 Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, the Clerk may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into their complaint.

4.9 Where the behaviour is so extreme, or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or Councillors, the Parish Council will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the Parish Council may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

4.10 The Parish Council does not have a legal duty to respond to those members of the public who are not Owslebury and Morestead parishioners. Owslebury Parish Council will consider this fact when receiving complaints or communications as described in policy in terms of whether they are or are not a parishioner of Owslebury and Morestead.

5. New complaints from complainants whose previous complaints have been treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent

5.1 New complaints from people who have come under this policy will be treated on their merits. The Clerk will decide whether any restrictions which have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. The Parish Council does not support a 'blanket policy' of ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.

5.2 The fact that a complaint is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and any restrictions imposed on contact with the complainant will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the Parish Council.

6 Record keeping

6.1 Adequate records will be retained by the Clerk along with the details of the case and the action that has been taken. This will include:

- The name and address of each customer who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent
- When the restriction comes into force and ends

- What the restrictions are
- When the customer and departments were advised

6.2 The complainant will be advised in the communication of the intention to keep the information as per GDPR Regulations.

This policy will be reviewed in February 2027~~2026~~