

2026



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS CODE OF PRACTICE



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Version History

Version	Reviewed at	Approved at
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 23 rd May 2012	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 23 rd May 2012
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2013	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2013
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 28 th May 2014	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 28 th May 2014
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 20 th May 2015	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 20 th May 2015
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2016	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2016
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023
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Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025
Version 1.01	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026

To be reviewed at each Annual Council Meeting.

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1. COMPLAINTANTS

1.1 This Code of Practice sets out procedures for dealing with any complaint received about Wootton Parish Council's administration and procedures. It applies to the Council's employees. Complainants can be members of the public, Councillors, or employees of Wootton Parish Council.

COMPLAINTS OUTSIDE THIS CODE

The following are excluded from this code:

TYPE OF CONDUCT	COMPLAIN TO
Financial irregularity	Complaints about financial irregularity should be referred to the Council's auditor, whose contact details can be obtained from the Clerk. (Local elector's statutory right to object about Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s16 Audit Commission Act 1998, and subsequent amendments)
Criminal activity	The police
Failure to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct, by a member of Wootton Parish Council (a copy of the code is available on Wootton Parish Council's website or from the Clerk)	The Monitoring Officer Bedford Borough Council Borough Hall Cauldwell Street Bedford MK42 9AP

2 CONFIDENTIALITY

2.1 The identity of a complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider a complaint. Care will be taken to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand, e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned.

3 COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

3.1 A complaints committee will be established and/or reviewed at the Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council.

3.2 The chairman and vice-chairman of the complaints committee will be elected at the Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council.

4 COMPLAINTS

4.1 All complaints will be deemed to be informal complaints unless a written complaint states that it is a formal complaint.

5 INFORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

5.1 An informal complaint may be given orally or in writing to the Clerk or Chairman of Wootton Parish Council, and will be recorded.

5.2 If an informal complaint is given to a Councillor it is their duty to notify the Clerk or Chairman of Wootton Parish Council.

5.3 The Clerk or Chairman of Wootton Parish Council will speak directly to the complainant and will attempt to settle the complaint and to ensure that the complainant feels satisfied that their grievance has been fully considered, taken seriously and acted upon accordingly.

5.4 If resolved, the Clerk or Chairman of Wootton Parish Council will inform all members at the next Full Council meeting.

5.5 If the complaint cannot be resolved the Clerk will instigate the formal complaints procedure.

6 FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

6.1 All formal complaints will be heard in public unless the complaints committee expressly resolves to exclude the press and public, due to the confidential nature of the complaint.

6.2 The complainant will be asked to put the formal complaint about Wootton Parish Council's administration or procedures in writing to the Clerk or other nominated officer.

6.3 If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other nominated officer, he or she will be advised to address it to the Chairman of Wootton Parish Council.

6.4 The Clerk or other nominated officer in consultation with the appropriate Chairman, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the complaints committee. The complainant will also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential, or whether notice of it will be given in the usual manner on the complaints committee agenda.

6.5 The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting of the complaints committee and may bring a representative with them if they so wish.

6.6 Ten clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant will provide Wootton Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other relevant evidence. Wootton Parish Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely upon at the meeting and shall do so within five clear working days, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time ahead of the meeting.

7 AT THE MEETING OF THE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

7.1 The complaints committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

7.2 The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

7.3 The complainant (and/or representative) will outline the grounds for complaint, and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii) members.

7.4 The Clerk or other nominated officer will have the opportunity to explain Wootton Parish Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant (and/or representative) and (ii) members.

7.5 The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant (and/or representative) will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

7.6 The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant (and/or representative) will be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, **ALL** parties will be invited back.

8.7 The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant (and/or representative) will be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day, they will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

8 AFTER THE MEETING OF THE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

8.1 The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven clear working days together with details of any action to be taken.

8.2 The decision will be communicated to all members at the next Full Council meeting.

Wootton Parish Council will bear in mind the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in dealing with complaints.

In the event of a seemingly serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaint, Wootton Parish Council may consider taking legal advice.

Please note that complaints about policy decisions will be subject to Rule 7 of Wootton Parish Council's Standing Orders (Previous Resolutions).