



Grievance Procedures

Reviewed at the Meeting of 12 June 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Anybody working within Wivelsfield Parish Council may, at some time, have problems or concerns about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that they wish to talk about with management. They will want their grievance to be addressed and, if possible, resolved.

1.2 Issues that may cause grievances include:

- * equal opportunities
- * bullying and harassment
- * work relations
- * new working practices
- * organisational change
- * working environment
- * health and safety
- * terms and conditions of employment

1.3 Grievances may occur at all levels and apply equally to management and employees.

1.4 The best method of resolving any general staff complaints is by informal discussion with the Clerk or employee's immediate Line Manager. Dealing with problems in such a way will usually lead to speedy resolutions. However, when problems cannot be resolved, formal procedures should be followed.

1.5 The option of using a mediator, where appropriate, as an independent third party will be considered. The third party could be an internal mediator as long as they are not involved in the issue, or in some cases an external mediator may be more appropriate. This option will be on a voluntary basis and will only be used if both parties agree to it. Wivelsfield Parish Council will aim to have a combination of internal and external mediators and the process for accessing mediation when required will be available to all staff.

- 1.6 The purpose of these Grievance Procedures is to ensure that there is a system in place whereby employees can raise a grievance matter formally. It should be used when employees have problems or concerns about their work, working environment or working relationships that they wish to raise and have addressed, and which have not been resolved on an informal basis. These procedures allow for any grievance to be dealt with fairly and speedily before it develops into a major problem.

2. Stage 1 - Statement of Grievance

- 2.1 The employee must set out the grievance in writing and send a copy to their Line Manager and the Clerk (if the Clerk is the Line Manager, then a copy should go to the Chair and Vice-Chair). If the problem is about the Line Manager or the Clerk, the grievance should be addressed to the Clerk or to the Chair of the Council (as appropriate).
- 2.2 If the grievance is not contested and easily resolvable, the Line Manager or Clerk (as appropriate) should respond in writing to the grievance within five working days. If it is not possible to respond within five working days, the employee should be given an explanation for the delay and advised when a response can be expected.

3. Stage 2 – Meeting

- 3.1 If the grievance is more complicated and/or contested, the Line Manager/Clerk /Chair of the Council (as appropriate) must invite the employee to attend at least one meeting to discuss the grievance at which the Clerk or another Councillor (as appropriate) should also be present.

The meeting must not take place unless:

- * The employee has informed the Line Manager/Clerk/Chair of the Council (as appropriate) what the basis for the grievance was when he or she made the statement as referred to in 2.1 above; and
- * The Line Manager/Clerk/Chair of the Council (as appropriate) has had a reasonable opportunity (three working days) to consider his/her response; and
- * The employee has been advised that he or she may be accompanied and assisted by another employee or a trade union representative of his or her choice.

- 3.2 The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

3.3 Depending on the nature of the grievance, it might be necessary for the Line Manager/Clerk/Chair of the Council to undertake an investigation and this will be discussed with the employee at the meeting.

3.4 Following the meeting, the Line Manager/Clerk/Chair of the Council (as appropriate) must inform the employee in writing of his/her decision as to his/her response to the grievance, where possible, within five working days after the meeting. The employee must also be informed of his/her right to appeal. If it is not possible to respond within five working days, the employee should be given an explanation for the delay and advised when a response can be expected.

4. Stage 3 - Appeal

4.1 If the matter is not resolved at Stage 2, the employee should raise the matter in writing with a more senior person within the Council depending on who the grievance was initially addressed to (eg if it was the Line Manager, then the Clerk, if it was the Clerk then the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Council).

4.2 The Clerk/Chair of the Council (as appropriate) should then arrange a meeting to hear the grievance within five working days and should advise the employee that he or she may be accompanied by another employee or trade union representative of his or her choice. The Clerk/Chair of the Council should also be accompanied by a designated Councillor.

4.3 Following the meeting, the Clerk/Chair of the Council (as appropriate) should respond to the grievance in writing within five to ten working days. If it is not possible to respond within five to ten working days, the employee should be given an explanation for the delay and advised when a response can be expected.

5. External Advice

If mutually agreed, where the grievance is against the Clerk, it may be helpful to seek external advice and assistance during the grievance procedure. An external facilitator might be able to help resolve the problem.

6. Grievance Procedure During Disciplinary Action

Should an employee raise a grievance about the behaviour of his/her Line Manager or the Clerk during the course of the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, it may be appropriate to suspend the disciplinary procedure for a short period until the grievance can be properly considered. The Council might also consider bringing in another Councillor (as appropriate) to deal with the disciplinary case.

7. Records

Full records should be kept including the statement of grievance, the response from Line/Clerk/Chair of the Council and any action taken together with the reasons for it. These records will be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Copies of minutes of the meetings held should be given to the employee.