



Appleton Parish Council

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Grievance Policy

Adopted by Appleton Parish Council by resolution on 16 June 2026 and will be reviewed periodically thereafter.

Reviewed:

Introduction

Appleton Parish Council (the Council) looks to be responsive to all concerns raised by its employees who are encouraged to raise issues with their line manager which they perceive are affecting their happiness at work. In cases where these issues are concerning the Parish Clerk, these should be addressed to the Chair of the Employment Committee. The Council will attempt to resolve issues informally (an informal grievance). When it has not been possible to resolve an issue informally, or when this would not be appropriate, a formal grievance may be raised in accordance with this policy. If an employee wishes to raise a formal grievance they should do so in writing by letter or email.

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.

1. This policy confirms: -

- 1.1. 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. 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
- 1.2. 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 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
- 1.3. any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council
- 1.4. an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final
- 1.5. 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)

- 1.6. recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- 1.7. If an employee who is subject to a disciplinary process files an unrelated grievance, the Council may pause the disciplinary process to address it. If related, both can be handled together. Grievances should be reviewed promptly to spot connections and ensure fairness.
- 1.8. If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they raised the grievance in good faith
- 1.9. 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 Council's and the employees' consent.
- 1.10. 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 (Section 2) 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 the Councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the Monitoring Officer of Warrington Borough 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 (see Section 3).
- 1.11. 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 employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and councilors' are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination.
- 1.12. 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 his or her 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 its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime.

2. Informal grievance procedure

- 2.1. 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 Chair of the Parish Council or, if appropriate, the Deputy Parish Council Chair or the Chair of the Employment committee.

If the employee's grievance is about a Councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that Councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employees' and the Councillor's consent.

3. Formal grievance procedure

- 3.1. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's grievance is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance.
- 3.2. The Council may delegate all or part the handling of the Grievance process to a committee, subcommittee, or group. If this delegation occurs, the employee will be notified. Any mention of "Council appointed body" in the text below refers to the Council delegated committee, subcommittee, or group. If no such delegation has occurred, it refers to the Council itself.
- 3.3. Formal Grievances should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the "Council appointed body".
- 3.4. The Council appointed body will appoint a sub-committee of three Councillors' to investigate the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.

4. Formal Grievance Investigation

- 4.1. The sub-committee will investigate the matter before the grievance meeting which may include interviewing others (e.g. employees, volunteers, Councilors or members of the public).

5. Formal Grievance Notification

- 5.1. Within 10 working days of the Council appointed body receiving the employee's written formal grievance, the employee will be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The sub-committee's notice will include the following:
 - 5.1.1. the names of its Chair and other members
 - 5.1.2. a summary of the employee's grievance based on their written submission
 - 5.1.3. the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will be within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance
 - 5.1.4. the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official
 - 5.1.5. a copy of the Council's Grievance Policy
 - 5.1.6. 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 their witnesses at least five working days before the meeting
 - 5.1.7. confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting
 - 5.1.8. evidence at least five working days before the meeting.

6. Formal Grievance Meeting

At the grievance meeting:

- 6.1. the Chair will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee
- 6.2. the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence
- 6.3. the Chair will ask the employee what action they want the Council to take
- 6.4. any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness

- 6.5. the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case
- 6.6. the Chair will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. which will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal
- 6.7. a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.

7. Formal Grievance appeal

- 7.1. If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, they may submit a written appeal to the Council appointed body. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.
- 7.2. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:
 - 7.2.1. a failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy
 - 7.2.2. the decision was not supported by the evidence
 - 7.2.3. the action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate
 - 7.2.4. new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
- 7.3. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Council appointed body who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the Council appointed body who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of three councillors who may include members of the Council appointed body. The appeal panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.
- 7.4. The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
- 7.5. At the appeal meeting the appeal panel Chair;
 - 7.5.1. will introduce the panel members to the employee
 - 7.5.2. explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employees' reasons for appealing against the decision of the Council appointed body sub-

committee

- 7.5.3. explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
- 7.6. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.
- 7.7. The appeal panel Chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision of the appeal panel and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
- 7.8. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Council appointed body sub-committee or substitute its own decision.
- 7.9. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

