KILMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
KILMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS AND AGREED POLICY

The procedures below should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint against Kilmington Parish Council.

If you have a complaint against a Parish Councillor, you should write to the Monitoring Officer who is the responsible person for dealing with complaints about councillors:

The Monitoring Officer
Legal and Democratic Services
East Devon District Council,
Blackdown House
Border Road
Honiton
EX14 1EJ

If you have a complaint against an employee of the Parish Council, you should write to the Chairman of the Parish Council – mark your envelope 'Private & Confidential'.

Chairman Kilmington Parish Council
c/o 5 Morton Way
Axminster EX13 5LE

If you have any other complaint, you should write to the Parish Clerk:

Mr Tim Leat
Parish Clerk
Kilmington Parish Council
5 Morton Way
Axminster
EX15 5LE

In order for your complaint to be dealt with, the following Code of Practice has been adopted so you can be assured your grievance will be properly and fully considered. It is hoped that by following this transparent process, the good reputation of the Parish Council will be maintained. This procedure will be followed where complaints cannot be resolved less formally by the Parish Clerk or the Chairman.

1. Kilmington Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint

2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

3.1. Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
3.2. Complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of East Devon District Council.

Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of EDDC

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

4. You may make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Parish Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Parish Clerk.

5. Wherever possible, the Parish Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Parish Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

6. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Parish Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the appropriate Committee of the Council or take it to the full Council if deemed necessary.

7. The Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.

8. The Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Parish Council will strive to notify you within 8 weeks of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint.

In addition from time to time the Parish Council receives complaints from members of the public. Some complaints are received by telephone or in writing and some by a visit to the Parish Clerk's office. In order to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively the Parish Council has a Complaints Policy. The Parish Council's administration is overseen by the Parish Clerk.

In the event that a complainant begins to make frequent contact with the Parish Clerk's office and hinders the normal day to day running of the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk will implement a policy for dealing with frequent or vexatious complainants, since such complaints can be time consuming and could lead to unnecessary additional cost to the council tax payer. The Parish Council's policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants will become operative if the complainant is deemed to be unreasonably persistent either by written or oral communication or excessive visits to the Parish Clerk's office.

A vexatious complainant will be notified that the Council's Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complaints is to be enforced, together with the reason why. The complainant will then be asked to adopt one or all of the following procedures:

- Request contact with the Parish Council in a particular form (for example, letters only)
- Request contact to take place with a named officer
- Restrict telephone calls to specified days and times;
- And/or be asked to enter into an agreement about future contact with the Parish Council.

The Council will decide how long it will spend on any one complaint and whether it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. In all cases where a complainant is deemed to be unreasonable and persistent, the Council will write to the complainant to justify its course of action and explain for how long it will be operative.

The complainant may challenge the Council's decision, although proof that the complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with will be required. However, if deemed to be a fair challenge the Council will conduct a review of the complaint and will re-consider whether the complaint should still be treated as unreasonable and/or vexatious. If a complainant persists in communicating with the Council once their case has been closed, the Council reserves the right to terminate all further communication.

The case will only be revisited if the complainant can provide fresh evidence that may affect the Council's previous decision concerning the original complaint. If the Council feels that reopening the complaint cannot be justified the complainant will be notified in writing that the case has been closed and there will be no further communication. New complaints received from complainants previously deemed to be unreasonable and/or vexatious will be treated on their merits. Complaints will be kept on file for no more than five years.

Policy first adopted 21/05/2019 and has been reviewed and revised as follows

Policy Adopted **8th June 2026**

Due for Review **8th June 2027**

Actually Reviewed