Lanreath Parish Council

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

Version	2.0
Status	For Council Adoption
Date Adopted	21 July 2026
Review Date	Annually
Owner	Lanreath Parish Council
Related Documents	Standing Orders; Code of Conduct; Equality Policy

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out how Lanreath Parish Council will handle complaints about its administration, procedures or services. It follows current NALC guidance and the principles of fairness, transparency and natural justice.

2. Scope

This procedure does not apply to complaints about councillor conduct (which must be referred to Cornwall Council's Monitoring Officer), employee grievances, Freedom of Information requests, Data Protection matters, planning decisions or matters where there is a statutory right of appeal.

3. Informal Resolution

Where possible, complaints should first be raised with the Clerk so that they may be resolved quickly and informally.

4. Formal Complaints

Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Clerk. Where the complaint concerns the Clerk it should be sent to the Chair. Where it concerns the Chair it should be sent to the Vice-Chair.

5. Acknowledgement

The Council will acknowledge receipt within five working days and advise the complainant of the next steps and likely timescale.

6. Investigation

The Clerk or an appointed officer will gather relevant information. If the matter requires Member consideration it will be referred to a Complaints Panel or Full Council.

7. Hearing

The complainant will receive at least seven clear working days' notice of any hearing and may attend with a representative. Both parties may submit supporting documents no later than seven clear working days before the hearing. The hearing should follow the principles of natural justice and, where appropriate, be held in private under the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Decision

The Council or Panel will consider all evidence before reaching a decision. The complainant will be advised in writing, normally within ten working days, including reasons for the decision and any action to be taken.

9. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Persistent, repetitive or abusive complaints may be managed under the Council's Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy while ensuring legitimate concerns continue to be considered fairly.

10. Records

A confidential record of complaints and outcomes will be maintained in accordance with the Council's Documents Retention Schedule and UK GDPR.

11. Learning and Review

The Council will review complaints periodically to identify improvements to procedures, services and governance.

12. Review of this Code

This Code will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or NALC guidance changes.

Complaints Outside this Procedure

- Councillor conduct – Monitoring Officer, Cornwall Council.
- Financial irregularity – External Auditor or appropriate authority.
- Criminal activity – Police.
- Freedom of Information – ICO after the Council's review process.
- Data protection – Information Commissioner's Office after the Council's internal process.