



Redgrave Parish Council

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

This policy is based on and complies with the **ACAS Code of Practice (2015)** and the ACAS Guide on Discipline and Grievances at Work. It is designed to encourage and maintain good relationships between Redgrave Parish Council (“the Council”) and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly and fairly as possible.

The policy sets out arrangements for employees to raise concerns, problems, or complaints about their employment with the Council. It will be applied consistently and in accordance with the **Equality Act 2010**, the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**, and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

This policy will be published on the Council’s website in an **accessible format (WCAG 2.2 AA compliant)** and made available in alternative formats on request.

Many issues can be raised and resolved during the course of normal working relationships. Employees are encouraged to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.

2. Key Principles

The following key principles are paramount in this policy:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied at grievance and appeal meetings by a workplace colleague, trade union representative, or trade union official. The companion may address the meeting, present the employee’s case, and confer with the employee, but may not answer questions on the employee’s behalf or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
- The Council will provide employees with reasonable notice of grievance/appeal meetings. If a chosen companion is unavailable, the employee may propose an alternative date within five working days of the original meeting, unless unreasonable.
- Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by both the employee and the Council.
- Employees have the right to appeal against the outcome of a grievance. The appeal decision is final.
- Information about an employee’s grievance will be restricted to those involved in the process. Records will be retained securely in line with the Council’s **Records Management and Information Security policies**.

- Audio or video recordings of proceedings are prohibited unless agreed by all parties as a reasonable adjustment (e.g., for medical reasons).
 - Where an employee subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the disciplinary process has concluded.
 - No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee for raising a grievance in good faith, even if the grievance is not upheld.
 - Mediation may be considered at any stage where appropriate (e.g., where communication has broken down or allegations of bullying or harassment are raised).
 - Employees may use the informal stage of this procedure for all grievances, including those concerning a **councillor**. However, complaints about councillors that fall under the **Code of Conduct** cannot proceed beyond the informal stage. Such matters must be referred to the **Monitoring Officer at Mid-Suffolk District Council**.
 - The Council has a duty of care to ensure a safe working environment. Where grievances involve staff safety (including bullying, harassment, or discrimination), the Council will take reasonable steps to address risks in line with its **Health & Safety Policy** and the Members' **Code of Conduct**.
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3. Informal Grievance Procedure

The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and quickly. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with their manager to see if an informal solution is possible.

If the grievance concerns the manager, the employee should instead contact the **Chair of the Council** or, if appropriate, another **member**.

If the grievance involves a **councillor**, it may be appropriate to include that councillor in the informal discussion — but only with the consent of both the employee and the councillor.

4. Formal Grievance Procedure

If informal resolution is not possible, and the complaint does not fall under the **Code of Conduct**, the employee may submit a formal grievance in writing to the **Chair of the Council**.

The Council will appoint a **Grievance Committee** of three members to hear the grievance. No member with direct involvement in the matter will be appointed. The committee will appoint one of its members to act as Chair.

The committee may appoint an **independent investigator** if the grievance is complex or requires fact-finding. The investigator may interview the employee, other staff, members, or relevant third parties, and will normally provide a written report to the committee.

Governance safeguard: Decisions on grievances will always be made collectively by the Grievance Committee. No grievance will be determined by a single officer or member.

5. Appeals

If the employee is not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to appeal. Appeals should be made in writing to the **Parish Clerk** (or, if the Clerk is directly involved, to the Chair).

The Council will appoint an **Appeals Committee** of three members not previously involved in the case. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

6. Confidentiality and Records

- All grievance matters will be treated confidentially.
 - Records of grievances, outcomes, and actions will be kept securely, and retained only for as long as necessary in line with the Council's **Records Management & Retention Policy**.
 - Information will be shared only with those directly involved in handling the grievance.
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7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner if ACAS guidance, ICO requirements, or the **SAPPP Practitioners' Guide** are updated.