



*The Parish of St. Neots
with Eynesbury*

Grievance Policy

Policy

It is the Parish's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. Our grievance procedure is available to all employees irrespective of position or status and allows everyone to seek redress of an individual grievance, or to lodge an appeal against a decision affecting them personally.

The Parish will endeavour to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision and, where employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage.

It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the conclusion of the grievance hearing(s).

The procedure is non-contractual but is designed to indicate how such matters should be dealt with. The Parish reserves the right, at its discretion, to vary, replace or terminate the procedure at any stage. All officers and managers are however reminded of the requirement to comply with the minimum statutory procedures set out in the Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004, effective from 2004, and to take all steps to ensure that any grievance is handled both fairly and reasonably

Procedure

Informal stage

If you have a grievance arising out of your job, or to do with any aspect of your employment, you should discuss it informally with your immediate manager. (See Notes 1 to 3 below for exceptions to this procedure.)

Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to your immediate manager. You will be invited to a formal grievance meeting where the key issues of the complaint can be ascertained and an appropriate investigation process agreed with you, any relevant witnesses and an officer or incumbent will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union official. Minutes of the meeting will be taken.

Stage 2

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the relevant person. A meeting will be arranged, constituted as in Stage 1, except that the alternate person will replace the person who heard the grievance. Minutes of the meeting will be taken. This decision will be final.

Investigations

The Parish is committed to ensuring that all grievances are fully investigated. This may include carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues, officers and volunteers, as well as analysing written records and information. Whilst the investigation report will, if necessary, be made available to all the parties concerned, the identity of witnesses will be kept confidential. You will be given full opportunity to state your case and say how you think the issue should be resolved. The person conducting the meeting may adjourn the meeting at any stage in order to calm a tense situation, or to check out facts, or take advice

Guidelines

1. You may raise a complaint directly with a parish officer or the incumbent if it:
 - a. concerns your immediate manager or
 - b. is of too personal or sensitive a nature to raise with your immediate manager.
2. Thus, complaints concerning discrimination, bullying or harassment by your immediate manager may be raised directly with a senior manager. This may be done informally or formally, i.e. at Stage 2 of the procedure.
3. If your complaint concerns an alleged wrongdoing or criminal offence by persons within the Parish, you should raise it immediately with an officer or incumbent, i.e. at Stage 3 of the procedure.
4. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of a person conducting a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with a senior manager. If necessary, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period until the grievance can be considered.
5. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from so doing. However, you should note that if your grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith, then you may be subject to a Parish disciplinary procedure.
6. A second management representative from another function may be invited to attend formal grievance meetings in order to act as a witness and note-taker.
7. The grievance procedure will be carried out as quickly as practically possible, however, where there are good reasons, e.g. the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.
8. The Parish reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure, in the interest of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.
9. For employees during their first year of employment, the Parish reserves the right to speed up the decision-making process and therefore may choose to follow a truncated version of the above procedure.

10. Notes taken at each stage of the grievance procedure will be committed to writing in summary form for joint signatures. The final decision will, likewise, be committed to writing and a copy placed on file. This will include;

- The nature and substance of the grievance
- The Parish's response
- Action taken
- Reasons for action taken
- Whether there was an appeal and if so, the outcome