

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Grievance Procedure for employees

Purpose and scope

It is the policy of the Council to give employees the opportunity to air and seek redress for any individual employment grievance which they may have. Grievances may be any concerns, problems or complaints employees wish to raise with the Council.

This document describes the procedure which aims to facilitate a speedy, fair and consistent solution to an individual employee's employment grievance. This procedure is produced in line with the ACAS Code of Practice (2009) as set out in the Employment Act 2008 and subsequent relevant amendments.

This procedure will apply to all employees unless it conflicts with a contractual or statutory requirement, which will take precedence. It will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent relevant amendments.

PRINCIPLES

- a) At every stage in the procedure the employee will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made.
- b) Grievances will be dealt with promptly and consistently.
- c) At all formal stages, the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a nominated representative, who may be a trade union representative or colleague, but not a solicitor or legal representative.
- d) An employee will have the right to appeal against any outcome of a Grievance Hearing.
- e) At no time, will an employee be penalised or victimised for having raised a Grievance against the council.

PROCEDURE

Wherever possible, any grievance (including bullying or harassment) should be raised informally with the Chair of the Employment Committee, or another Member nominated for that purpose where appropriate.

As Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council employs one member of staff (the Parish Clerk), any grievance raised by the Clerk should be directed to the Chair of the Employment Committee. Where the grievance concerns the Chair of the Employment Committee, another Member not implicated in the matter will be nominated by the Council to receive and manage the grievance.

The recipient of the grievance will share it with the rest of the Employment Committee, subject to discretion and confidentiality. If the grievance relates to the whole of the Employment Committee, the Parish Council will appoint Members who are independent of the matter to hear the grievance.

If the grievance relates to the whole of the Parish Council, advice will be sought from an appropriate external body, such as the Society of Local Council Clerks or Avon Local Councils Association. Any Member involved in informal resolution will take no further part in any subsequent investigation, grievance hearing, or appeal.

1 Written Statement:

If the employee does not consider it appropriate to raise the grievance informally, or if requested following informal discussion, the employee should submit a formal grievance in writing to the Employment Committee.

2 Meeting or Hearing:

Normally, unless agreed otherwise with the employee, within five working days of receipt of a written grievance, arrangements will be made for a grievance hearing.

A Hearings Manager, selected from the Employment Committee and not previously involved in the matter, will make the arrangements and ensure the hearing is held in a confidential location, free from interruptions.

The panel will normally consist of Members of the Employment Committee, subject to availability and the need to ensure impartiality. Where the size of the Council or the circumstances of the case make it impracticable for Members to investigate the grievance independently of the hearing and appeal stages, the Council may appoint an external investigating officer to establish the facts of the case. The investigating officer will have no role in the decision-making process.

The panel will:

- investigate the substance of the grievance,
- hear submissions from the employee, and
- consider any other evidence it deems appropriate.

The hearing may be adjourned to allow further investigation.

The employee may call witnesses by prior arrangement. There is no right for Members or others implicated in the grievance to cross-examine the employee, though the panel may interview witnesses separately. The panel may ask the employee what outcome they are seeking and will take this into account when preparing its response

3 Response:

The Hearings Manager, in agreement with the panel, will advise the employee of the decision in writing within 14 days of the hearing and, where appropriate, include an action plan.

The Employment Committee will consider the options, costs, and practicality of any action plan, implement agreed solutions, and monitor outcomes. Where appropriate, mediation may be sought, and advice may be obtained from SLCC, ALCA, or ACAS.

4 Appeal:

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing within five working days. An Appeals Panel will be appointed consisting of Members not involved in the grievance hearing or investigation. Given the size of the Council, this may be an ad hoc panel appointed specifically for the appeal.

The Appeals Panel Chair will arrange to meet with the employee and any relevant parties without unreasonable delay. If the Chair of the Council was involved at the grievance stage, another suitable Member will act as Appeals Chair.

The Appeals Panel will review:

- whether the procedure was followed correctly,
- whether the decision was reasonable, and/or
- whether new evidence has come to light.

The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final and will be confirmed in writing within 14 days.

5 Bullying or Harassment:

Where a grievance concerns alleged bullying or harassment, it should be handled under this procedure and in accordance with the Council's Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment Policy. Where appropriate, disciplinary action may follow, or in the case of elected Members, a Code of Conduct complaint may be made via the Standards process.

6 Right to be Accompanied:

At all formal stages, the employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or nominated colleague. External supporters (e.g. solicitor, partner, parent) are not permitted.

7 Hearing Panels

Grievance hearings and appeals will be undertaken by Members appointed for that purpose, normally through the Employment Committee and Appeals Committee. Members involved in investigation, informal resolution, or the original hearing must not sit on the appeal panel. Where the size of the Council makes standing panels impracticable, ad hoc panels may be appointed, provided impartiality and separation of roles are maintained.

8 Confidentiality:

So far as reasonably practicable, all grievances will be treated confidentially between the panel, the employee, and any person complained about. Where wider investigation is required, the employee will be informed.

9 Notetaking

A note-taker independent of the Employment Committee, Appeals Committee, and any investigating officer will be provided for all formal grievance and appeal hearings. Notes will respect confidentiality and be retained in accordance with Council policy.

10 Record Keeping:

Written records of the grievance, decisions, action taken, appeals, and outcomes will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018).

11 Grievances raised during Disciplinarys.

Where a grievance is raised during a disciplinary process, disciplinary proceedings will normally be paused in line with SLCC and ACAS guidance. In exceptional cases, matters may proceed concurrently, following appropriate advice.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Jan 2026
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			