

After the meeting

You will be informed of the outcome of the Panel meeting in writing (post or email) within 5 working days of the Panel making a decision (not including Bank Holidays), together with details of any action to be taken.

Any decision, whether taken in public or otherwise, shall be announced at the next meeting of the Council.

If you are dissatisfied with the Formal Complaint Panel's decision, you have the right to make an appeal to the Appeals Panel of the Council, within ten working days (not including Bank Holidays) of being notified of the outcome of the Panel meeting.

The Appeal Panel

The Appeals Panel is made up of the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee and two other experienced Councillors. The Panel is chaired by the Chairman of the Council.

The process behind an Appeal Panel will be the same as for the Formal Complaints Panel.

The decision will be made by the Appeal Panel by way of a show of hands. In the event of a tie of vote the Chairman of the Panel (who is the Chairman of the Council) will have both a personal and casting vote.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

If you have any questions please contact the Clerk at the address at the front of this leaflet.

Last reviewed by the Parish Council October 2012

Hughenden Parish Council



Formal Complaints Procedure

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About this leaflet

This leaflet covers formal complaints against the Council as an organisation (as opposed to individual Councillors or staff). We aim to resolve such problems using less formal measures but realise that it may on occasion be necessary to handle a matter using the procedures set out in this leaflet.

The Council believes that all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

Before making your formal complaint

You should not make a formal complaint just because you do not agree with a Parish Council decision. You will need to show correct procedures or policies were not followed and that this resulted in an unfair outcome. The Parish Council has a number of policies and procedures which are open for public scrutiny either on the website or on request from the Clerk (contact details are on the front of this leaflet).

The Complaints Panel

Formal complaints are considered by a Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel consist of the whole Council, with the exception of the Chairman of the Council and the other Councillors who make up the Appeals Panel (see the section overleaf headed 'The Appeals Panel').

Before the Complaint Panel Meeting

You will be asked to give details of the complaint in writing to the Clerk or Chairman of the Council (which ever is most appropriate). The Council will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and tell you what will happen next.

You will be invited to attend the meeting of the Formal Complaint Panel and to bring a representative with you if you wish.

Seven clear working days prior to the meeting (not including bank holidays) you should provide the Council with copies of any documentation, or other evidence, which you wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council will also provide copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting allowing enough time for the complainant to read the material in good time for the meeting.

The Formal Complaint Panel Meeting

1. The Panel will appoint their Chairman decided by a show of hands. The Chairman of the meeting will then introduce everyone and explain how the meeting will run.
2. The Panel will consider whether the circumstances of the complaint mean the public and the press should be excluded. The decision will be made by vote, with the Chairman of the Panel having an initial personal and casting vote.
3. You or your representative will have up to 15mins to give the grounds for your complaint and thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk (or other nominated Officer) and then Panel members.
4. The Clerk (or other nominated Officer) then has up to 15mins to explain the Council's position and questions can then be asked by you or your representative and then Panel members.
5. The Clerk (or other nominated Officer) will be offered the opportunity to briefly sum up their position and you will then be given the same opportunity.

Both you and the Clerk (or other nominated Officer) will be asked to leave the room while the Committee debates. The Panel will make its decision by a show of hands. The Chairman of the meeting will have a personal vote and casting vote in the event of a tie.

At all times, the Council has the duty to act fairly.