

# **Complaints Policy for Cranborne & Edmondsham Parish Council**

## **1. Purpose**

The Parish Council aims to provide high-quality services for its community. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when individuals may have concerns or complaints about council activities, decisions, or services. This policy sets out how complaints can be submitted, handled, and resolved.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all complaints received by the Council relating to its actions, services, procedures, and decisions. It does not cover complaints regarding individual councillors, which are handled separately under the Councillor Code of Conduct.

## **3. How to Make a Complaint**

Complaints should be submitted by email to the Clerk of the Parish Council – contact details can be found on the council website.

Complainants should include the following information:

- The nature of the complaint, with specific details.
- Any relevant supporting evidence or documentation.
- Preferred resolution or outcome, if applicable.

Should the complaint be about an employee of council, the individual should request contact details for the Chair of Council for the matter to be submitted in writing. These can be obtained through the Clerk.

## **4. Acknowledgment and Response Time**

- Upon receipt, complaints will be acknowledged within 7 working days.
- A formal response will be provided within 20 working days, or the complainant will be informed of any delays and provided with a revised timeline.
- A complaint must be made within 6 months of the activity, decision or service that is being questioned.

## **5. Informal Resolution**

In many cases, complaints can be resolved informally by discussing the matter with the Clerk or Council representatives. Where possible, informal resolution will be encouraged before escalating to a formal procedure.

## **6. Formal Investigation**

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, a formal investigation will be initiated.

The process involves:

- Assigning an investigating officer (either the Clerk or a designated council member).
- Reviewing all relevant documents and communications.
- Conducting interviews or gathering additional evidence if necessary.