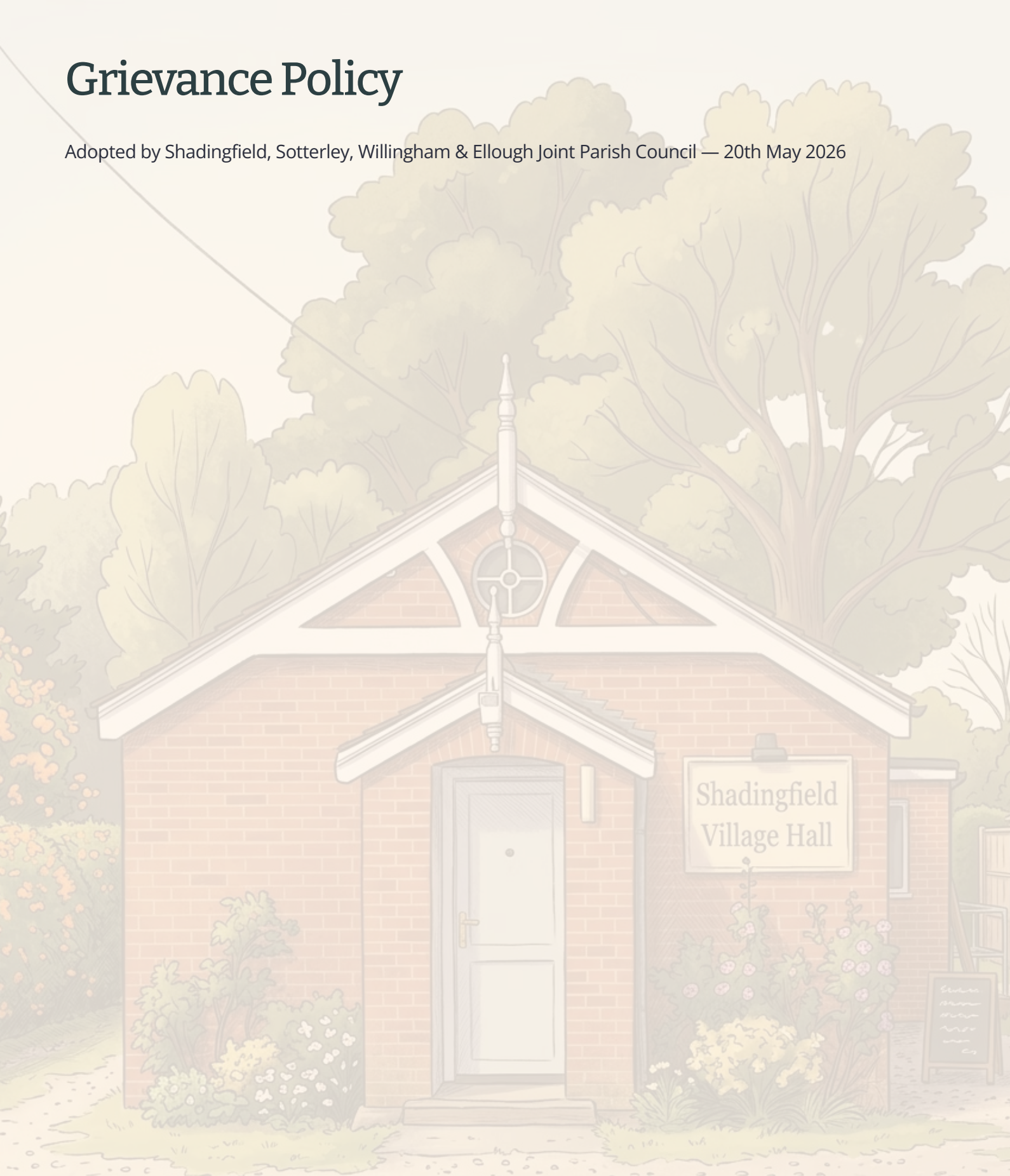
Grievance Policy

Adopted by Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough Joint Parish Council — 20th May 2026



This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.

Next review: April 2028.

Purpose & Key Principles

This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council.

This policy applies to all employees of the Council. It will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

- If an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard **after** the disciplinary procedure is concluded.
- If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee who raised it in good faith.
- Audio or video recordings of proceedings at any stage of this procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all parties as a reasonable adjustment for a health condition.
- Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. Records will be kept confidentially in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

Informal Resolution

Where possible, employees should raise concerns informally with the Clerk or, where appropriate, the Chair of the Council. Many issues can be resolved quickly through open discussion.

If the grievance concerns bullying, harassment or misconduct by the Clerk or Chair, the employee may approach another councillor, a trade union representative or a trusted colleague for support.

ⓘ Informal resolution is encouraged but not mandatory.

Formal Grievance Procedure

Submitting a Grievance

If the matter is serious or cannot be resolved informally, the employee should submit a written grievance to the Clerk or Chair. The written grievance should:

- Set out the facts clearly.
- Avoid insulting or abusive language.
- Explain the outcome sought.

If the grievance concerns the Clerk or Chair, the employee may submit it to another councillor.

If the employee's complaint relates to the conduct of a councillor and cannot be resolved informally, it may constitute a Code of Conduct complaint. In that case, it cannot be dealt with under the formal stages of this procedure, and the employee should be directed to the monitoring officer of the relevant principal authority.

Investigation

Where the grievance is complex, the panel hearing the grievance may appoint an investigator to establish the facts before the hearing takes place. The investigator will summarise their findings and present them to the panel. The employee will be given a copy of any investigation report in advance of the hearing.

Grievance Hearing

The employee will normally be notified in writing of the hearing within **10 working days** of the Council receiving the written grievance. The hearing itself will normally take place within **25 working days** of receipt of the grievance. At the hearing:

- The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- The companion may address the hearing and present the employee's case; respond on behalf of the employee; and confer with the employee at any time. The companion may not answer questions put directly to the employee, address the hearing against the employee's wishes, or prevent the employee from explaining their own case.
- The employee will have the opportunity to explain the grievance and suggest solutions.
- The Council representative will ask questions and explore the issues raised.

A written decision will normally be provided within **5 working days** of the hearing.

Appeal

Submitting an Appeal

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to the Clerk or Chair within **5 working days** of receiving the written decision. The appeal should set out the grounds for challenging the decision.

Appeals may be raised on the following grounds:

- A failure by the Council to follow this procedure.
- The decision was not supported by the evidence.
- The action proposed was inadequate or inappropriate.
- New evidence has come to light since the grievance hearing.

Appeal Hearing

The employee will normally be notified in writing of the appeal hearing within **10 working days** of receipt of the appeal. The hearing will normally take place within **25 working days** of receipt of the appeal.

The appeal will be heard by a Grievance Appeals Committee of at least **three councillors** who have had no prior involvement in the matter. If it is not possible to find three councillors with no prior involvement, the appeal will be heard by the three councillors with the least prior involvement, or the Council may seek appropriate independent support.

The employee has the right to be accompanied on the same terms as set out in the Grievance Hearing section above.

A written decision will normally be provided within **5 working days** of the appeal hearing. **This decision is final.**

Key Timelines at a Glance

Stage	Notification	Hearing / Decision
Grievance hearing notification	Within 10 working days of receipt	—
Grievance hearing	—	Within 25 working days of receipt
Written decision after hearing	—	Within 5 working days of hearing
Appeal submission deadline	Within 5 working days of decision	—
Appeal hearing notification	Within 10 working days of appeal receipt	—
Appeal hearing	—	Within 25 working days of appeal receipt
Written decision after appeal	—	Within 5 working days of appeal hearing

Grievances Raised by the Clerk

Where the Clerk raises a grievance, the same process and timelines set out in the formal procedure and appeal sections apply. The Chair will handle all communications in place of the Clerk. The Clerk has the same right to be accompanied as set out in the Grievance Hearing section.

Hearing: A Grievance Committee of councillors with no prior involvement in the matter will hear the grievance.

Appeal: An Appeals Committee of councillors not previously involved will hear any appeal brought by the Clerk.

Mediation

At any stage, either party may request mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process and requires the consent of all parties involved. It may be conducted internally or by an external mediator, and aims to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution.

ⓘ Mediation is available at any point in the process — before, during, or after formal proceedings — provided all parties consent.

Record Keeping

Records of grievances, hearings and outcomes will be kept confidentially in accordance with **UK GDPR** and the Council's Data Protection Policy.