CHILTON PARISH COUNCIL

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

March 2024

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Chilton Parish Council's (CPC) **administration and procedures** and it applies to the CPC's employees. Councillors are covered by **Suffolk Local Code of Conduct** which has been adopted by the council and any complaint against a councillor should be addressed to Babergh District Council's Monitoring Officer. Complaints against **policy decisions** made by CPC shall be referred back to the Council.

2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by CPC's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Parish Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

4. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman, Vice Chairman or the Parish Clerk (*except where the complainant is about the Clerk's own actions)*, shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

5. Where the Chairman or Vice Chairman receives a written complaint about the Parish Clerk's own actions, the Parish Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

6. The Parish Clerk, Chairman or Vice Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

7. The Parish Clerk, Chairman or Vice Chairman shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Parish Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).

8. CPC shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

9. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

10. CPC shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

This policy was adopted by Chilton Parish Council at its meeting on 5th January 2015

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The aims of this Disciplinary Procedure and its associated Disciplinary Rules are to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide a framework within which managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary. The standards of conduct expected of all employees are set out in the Disciplinary Rules which are appended to this.

1.2 It is our policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts and to give employees the opportunity to respond before taking any formal action.

1.3 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE PROCEDURE?

The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

3. WHAT IS COVERED BY THE PROCEDURE?

3.1 This procedure is used to deal with misconduct. It does not apply to cases involving genuine sickness absence, proposed redundancies or poor performance. In those cases reference should be made to the appropriate policy or procedure.

3.2 Minor conduct issues can often be resolved informally between you and the Chairman. These discussions should be held in private and without undue delay whenever there is cause for concern. Where appropriate, a note of any such informal discussions may be placed on your personnel file but will be ignored for the purposes of any future capability hearings. In some cases an informal verbal warning may be given, which will not form part of your disciplinary records. Formal steps will be taken under this procedure if the matter is not resolved, or if informal discussion is not appropriate (for example, because of the seriousness of the allegation).

3.3 You will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct, unless we decide it amounts to gross misconduct or you have not yet completed your probationary period.

3.4 If you have difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, you should discuss the situation with the Chairman as soon as possible.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1 Our aim is to deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.

4.2 You, and anyone accompanying you (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure.

4.3 You will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to disciplinary proceedings against you, unless we believe that a witness's identity should remain confidential.

5. INVESTIGATIONS

5.1 The purpose of an investigation is for us to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations against you, before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. We will appoint a HR Committee to investigate and we will set out a provisional timetable for the investigation, which will be communicated to all parties. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective. We reserve the ability to appoint an independent third party to investigate the allegations made.

5.2 Investigative interviews are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held.

5.3 You do not normally have the right to bring a companion to an investigative interview. However, we may allow you to bring a companion if it helps you to overcome any disability, or any difficulty in understanding English.

5.4 You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending investigative interviews if required.

6. CRIMINAL CHARGES

6.1 Where your conduct is the subject of a criminal investigation, charge or conviction we will investigate the facts before deciding whether to take formal disciplinary action.

6.2 We will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take. Where you are unable or have been advised not to attend a disciplinary hearing or say anything about a pending criminal matter, we may have to take a decision based on the available evidence.

6.3 A criminal investigation, charge or conviction relating to conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if we consider that it is relevant to your employment.

7. SUSPENSION

7.1 In some circumstances we may need to suspend you from work. The suspension will be for no longer than is necessary to investigate the allegations and we will confirm the arrangements to you in writing. While suspended you should not visit our premises or contact any of our clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or staff, unless you have been authorised to do so by the HR Committee.

7.2 Suspension of this kind is not a disciplinary penalty and does not imply that any decision has already been made about the allegations. [You will continue to receive your full [basic] salary and benefits during the period of suspension].

8. NOTIFICATION OF A HEARING

8.1 Following any investigation, if we consider there are grounds for disciplinary action, you will be required to attend a disciplinary hearing. We will inform you in writing of the allegations against you, the basis for those allegations, and what the likely range of consequences will be if we decide after the hearing that the allegations are true. We will also include the following where appropriate:

(a) a summary of relevant information gathered during the investigation;

(b) a copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing; and

(c) a copy of any relevant witness statements, except where a witness's identity is to be kept confidential, in which case we will give you as much information as possible while maintaining confidentiality.

8.2 We will give you written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing. The hearing will be held as soon as reasonably practicable, but you will be given a reasonable amount of time to prepare your case based on the information we have given you.

9. THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

9.1 You may bring a companion to any disciplinary hearing or appeal hearing under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell the HR Committee Chairman who your chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing.

9.2 A companion is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay but no-one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

9.3 If your choice of companion is unreasonable we may require you to choose someone else, for example:

(a) if in our opinion your companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the hearing; or

(b) if your companion works at another site and someone reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work; or

(c) if your companion is unavailable at the time a hearing is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days.

9.4 We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of your family) where this will help overcome a disability, or where you have difficulty understanding English.

10. PROCEDURE AT DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

10.1 If you or your companion cannot attend the hearing you should inform us immediately and we will arrange an alternative time. You must make every effort to attend the hearing, and

failure to attend without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself. If you fail to attend without good reason, or are persistently unable to do so (for example for health reasons), we may have to take a decision based on the available evidence.

10.2 The hearing will be chaired by a councillor on the HR Committee. You may bring a companion with you to the disciplinary hearing (see paragraph 9).

10.3 At the disciplinary hearing we will go through the allegations against you and the evidence that has been gathered. You will be able to respond and present any evidence of your own. Your companion may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the hearing.

10.4 You may ask relevant witnesses to appear at the hearing, provided you give us sufficient advance notice to arrange their attendance. You will be given the opportunity to respond to any information given by a witness. However, you will not normally be permitted to cross-examine witnesses unless, in exceptional circumstances, we decide that a fair hearing could not be held otherwise.

10.5 We may adjourn the disciplinary hearing if we need to carry out any further investigations such as re-interviewing witnesses in the light of any new points you have raised at the hearing. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

10.6 We will inform you in writing of our decision and our reasons for it. Where possible we will also explain this information to you in person.

11. DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES

11.1 The usual penalties for misconduct are set out below. No penalty should be imposed without a hearing. We aim to treat all employees fairly and consistently, and a penalty imposed on another employee for similar misconduct will usually be taken into account but should not be treated as a precedent. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

11.2 **Stage 1 - First written warning.** It will usually be appropriate for a first act of misconduct where there are no other active written warnings on your disciplinary record.

11.3 **Stage 2 - Final written warning.** It will usually be appropriate for:

(a) misconduct where there is already an active written warning on your record; or

(b) misconduct that we consider sufficiently serious to warrant a final written warning even though there are no other active warnings on your record.

11.4 **Stage 3 - Dismissal.** It will usually only be appropriate for:

(a) any misconduct during your probationary period;

(b) further misconduct where there is an active final written warning on your record; or

(c) any gross misconduct regardless of whether there are active warnings on your record. Gross misconduct will usually result in immediate dismissal without notice or

payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal). Examples of gross misconduct are set out in our Disciplinary Rules, which are contained in the Staff Handbook.

11.5 **Alternatives to dismissal.** In some cases we may at our discretion consider alternatives to dismissal. These will usually be accompanied by a final written warning. Examples include:

(a) Demotion.

(b) Transfer to another department or job.

(c) A period of suspension without pay.

(d) Loss of seniority.

(e) Reduction in pay.

(f) Loss of future pay increment or bonus.

(g) Loss of overtime.

12. THE EFFECT OF A WARNING

12.1 Written warnings will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required, the period for which the warning will remain active, and the likely consequences of further misconduct in that active period.

12.2 A first written warning will usually remain active for six months and a final written warning will usually remain active for **12** months. Your conduct may be reviewed at the end of a warning's active period and if it has not improved sufficiently we may decide to extend the active period.

12.3 After the active period, the warning will remain permanently on your personnel file but will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings.

13. APPEALS AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ACTION

13.1 If you feel that disciplinary action taken against you is wrong or unjust you should appeal in writing, stating your full grounds of appeal, to the HR Committee within one week of the date on which you were informed of the decision.

13.2 If you are appealing against dismissal, the date on which dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal. However, if your appeal is successful you will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

13.3 If you raise any new matters in your appeal, we may need to carry out further investigation. If any new information comes to light we will provide you with a summary including, where appropriate, copies of additional relevant documents and witness statements. You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing, and you or your companion may comment on any new evidence arising during the appeal before any decision is taken.

13.4 We will give you written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing.

13.5 The appeal hearing may be a complete re-hearing of the matter or it may be a review of the fairness of the original decision in the light of the procedure that was followed and any new

information that may have come to light. This will be at our discretion depending on the circumstances of your case. In any event the appeal will be dealt with as impartially as possible.

13.6 Where possible, the appeal hearing will be conducted impartially by councillors forming an Appeals Committee who have not been previously involved in the case. You may bring a companion with you to the appeal hearing (see paragraph 9).

13.7 We may adjourn the appeal hearing if we need to carry out any further investigations in the light of any new points you have raised at the hearing. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

13.8 Following the appeal hearing we may:

(a) confirm the original decision;

(b) revoke the original decision; or

(c) substitute a different penalty.

13.9 We will inform you in writing of our final decision as soon as possible. Where possible we will also explain this to you in person. There will be no further right of appeal.

This Policy was adopted by Chilton Parish Council on 5th January 2015

DISCIPLINARY RULES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 These Disciplinary Rules should be read in conjunction with our Disciplinary Procedure. The aim of the Disciplinary Rules and Disciplinary Procedure is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide a framework within which managers can work with staff to maintain those standards and encourage improvement where necessary.

1.2 It is our policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

1.3 If you are in any doubt as to your responsibilities or the standards of conduct expected you should speak to your line manager or chairman.

1.4 These rules do not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. RULES OF CONDUCT

2.1 While working for us you should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular you should:

(a) observe the terms and conditions of your contract, particularly with regard to:

(i) hours of work;

(ii) confidentiality;

(b) observe all our policies, procedures and regulations notified to you from time to time;

(c) take reasonable care in respect of the health and safety of colleagues and third parties [and comply with our Health and Safety Policy];

(d) comply with all reasonable instructions given by managers; and

(e) act at all times in good faith and in our best interests and those of our staff.

2.2 Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct may result in action being taken under our Disciplinary Procedure.

3. MISCONDUCT

The following are examples of matters that will normally be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure:

(a) Minor breaches of our policies];

(b) Minor breaches of your contract;

(c) Damage to, or unauthorised use of, our property;

(d) Poor timekeeping;

(e) Time wasting;

(f) Unauthorised absence from work;

(g) Refusal to follow instructions;

(h) Excessive use of our telephones for personal calls;

(i) Excessive personal e-mail or internet usage;

(j) Obscene language or other offensive behaviour;

(k) Negligence in the performance of your duties; or

(l) Smoking in no-smoking areas.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

4. GROSS MISCONDUCT

4.1 Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract and includes misconduct which, in our opinion, is likely to prejudice our business or reputation or irreparably damage the working relationship and trust between us. Gross misconduct will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and will normally lead to dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).

4.2 The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

(a) Theft or fraud;

(b) Physical violence or bullying;

(c) Deliberate and serious damage to property;

(d) Serious misuse of our property or name;

(e) Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;

(f) Repeated or serious failure to obey instructions, or any other serious act of insubordination;

(g) Unlawful discrimination or harassment;

(h) Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;

(i) Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances during working hours;

(j) Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;

(k) Serious breach of health and safety rules;

(l) Serious breach of confidence;

(m) Accepting or offering a bribe or other secret payment;

(n) Conviction for a criminal offence that in our opinion may affect our reputation or our relationships with our staff, customers or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to continue to work for us;

(o) Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;

(p) Serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of your contract or operating procedures;

(q) Knowing breach of statutory rules affecting your work;

(r) Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to our Data Protection Policy;

(s) Harassment of, or discrimination against, employees, contractors, clients or members of the public, related to gender, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion or belief or age;

(t) Refusal to disclose any of the information required by your employment or any other information that may have a bearing on the performance of your duties;

(u) Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefits;

(v) Knowingly taking parental, paternity or adoption leave when not eligible to do so or for a purpose other than supporting a child;

(w) Making untrue allegations in bad faith against a colleague;

This policy was adopted by Chilton Parish Council on 5th January 2015

DOCUMENT	PAPER / ELECTRONIC	LOCATION	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
Administration			
Agendas	E	Computer	3 years
Clerk's Personnel records	P	Chairman	15 months after ceasing employment
Contracts	P	File	Indefinitely
Declaration of Office Chairman	P	Admin File	Term of Office
Declaration of Office Councillor	P	Admin File	Term of Office
Election documents	P	Admin File	6 months after Election
Inspection Reports	P	Admin File	Indefinitely
Leases	P	File	Indefinitely
Newsletter	E	Computer	Indefinitely
Planning Applications & Responses	E	BDC website	
Register of Interests	E	BDC website	
Routine Correspondence	P	Correspondence File	3 months
Routine emails	E	email account	3 months
Signed Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting	P	Minutes File	Indefinitely
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	P	Minutes File	Indefinitely
Finance			
Annual Return	P	Accounts File by Year	Indefinitely
Bank paying-in books & Cheque book stubs	P	Finance File	2 years
Bank Statements	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
Clerk expenses	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
Insurance policies	P	Accounts File by Year	Indefinitely
Paid Invoices	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
PAYE returns including hours paid	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
Quotation and tenders	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
Receipt & Payment Accounts	P	Accounts File by Year	Indefinitely
Receipt Books	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
VAT records	P	Accounts File by Year	12 years
Burial Authority			
Administration Processes, Plan of Grave spaces, Registers and copy certificates	P	Burials File	Indefinitely

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Introduction:

1.1 Chilton Parish Council ("Council") is committed to ensuring that, in the exercise of its functions, it fulfils it legal responsibilities under all legislation concerning equality and diversity and does not engage in unlawful discrimination within the Council (including staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors and in the delivery of its service to the public.

1.2 The Council will actively develop positive practices which promote equality of opportunity and enable residents and customers to fully participate and staff to realise their full potential. No resident, customer, job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or will be disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be justified.

1.3 This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

2. Legislation

2.1 It is unlawful, in relation to the Equality Act 2010 to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

2.2 Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

2.3 The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

2.4 The Council will ensure that all decisions on participation, recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career development are based on abilities, merits, and objective job-related criteria.

3. Equal opportunities in employment

3.1 The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

3.2 The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council may also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

3.3 The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

3.4 The council has a separate grievance policy and procedure for staff members to make a complaint if they feel they are being unlawfully discriminated against.

4. People not employed by the council.

4.1 The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use services offered by the council.

4.2 Any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others should be reported to the council who will take appropriate action.

5. Commitments:

5.1 Chilton Parish Council is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
- Promoting a good and harmonious learning environment in which all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated.
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Fulfilling all its legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complying with its own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.

6. Implementation:

6.1 The Chairman and all members of the Council have the responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. All members are expected to create the equality environment, which is its objective.

6.2 In order to implement this policy the Council undertakes to:

- Communicate the policy to members by issuing a copy of this document to all its members.
- Where appropriate, the Council will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that it will not consciously, or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of applicants for membership of the Council.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into roles and responsibilities of the Council.
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

7. Misconduct

7.1 Acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, or by way of Code of Conduct complaint as appropriate, in relevant circumstances and any appropriate action will be taken.

7.2 The Council reserves the right to take steps to protect employees in cases of inappropriate behaviour to them, including by councillors and members of the public.

7.3 In the case of councillor misconduct in this respect, complaints may be made to the District Council Monitoring Officer, under the Council's Code of Conduct.

7.4 The Council has a corporate Complaints Procedure.

7.5 Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

8. Monitoring and Review:

8.1 The Parish Council will establish appropriate and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of its equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of the equality and diversity policy will be reviewed annually and remedial action will be taken as necessary.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 It is our policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal grievance you raise, hold a meeting to discuss it with you, inform you in writing of the outcome, and give you a right of appeal if you are not satisfied.

1.2 Issues that may cause grievances include:

(a) terms and conditions of employment;

(b) health and safety;

(c) work relations;

(d) bullying and harassment;

(e) new working practices;

(f) working environment;

(g) organisational change; and

(h) discrimination.

1.3 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended at any time and we may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE PROCEDURE?

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

3. USING THIS PROCEDURE

3.1 If you have difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability or because English is not your first language, you should discuss the situation with the Chairman as soon as possible.

3.2 This Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, you should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.

3.3 Written grievances will be placed on your personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

4. RAISING GRIEVANCES INFORMALLY

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the Chairman. If the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to another

Member of the Council. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

5. FORMAL WRITTEN GRIEVANCES

5.1 If your grievance cannot be resolved informally you should put it in writing and submit it to the Chairman, indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns him or her, you may submit it instead to the Vice Chairman.

5.2 The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may need to ask you to provide further information.

6. INVESTIGATIONS

6.1 In some cases it may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation will be carried out by the Chairman.

6.2 You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.

6.3 We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases we may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

7. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

7.1 You may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who your chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.

7.2 At the meeting, your companion may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.

7.3 Acting as a companion is voluntary and your colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

7.4 If your choice of companion is unreasonable we may ask you to choose someone else, for example:

(a) if in our opinion your companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the meeting; or

(b) if your companion works at another site and someone reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work; or

(c) if your companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards.

8. GRIEVANCE MEETINGS

8.1 We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within **one week** of receiving your written grievance.

8.2 You and your companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

8.3 The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made.

8.4 After an initial grievance meeting we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

8.5 Your companion at a grievance meeting may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.

8.6 We will write to you, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform you of the outcome of your grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind you of your right of appeal. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give you this information in person.

9. APPEALS

9.1 If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the Chairman stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

9.2 We will hold an appeal meeting. This will be dealt with impartially by councillors forming the Appeals Committee who have not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You have a right to bring a companion to the meeting (see paragraph 9).

9.3 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal

This policy was adopted by Chilton Parish Council on 5th January 2015

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of Health and Safety legislation for premises and activities for which it is responsible.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1 The Parish Council aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors, residents and members of the public within its area, who may be affected by the Council's activities.

2.2. The Parish Council will ensure that any buildings and amenities belonging to the Council are properly managed by the Council and that the Council set up and monitor appropriate Health and Safety policies and procedures for the protection of the public.

2.3. Councillors are required to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety when carrying out duties on behalf of the Parish Council.

3. The Parish Clerk

3.1 If the Parish Clerk works from home, he/she must ensure that he/she works in a safe working environment.

3.2 This includes observing the legal recommendations for safe handling, the use of computer equipment, and workstation design.

4. Contractors, Employees and Volunteer Workers.

4.1. The Parish Council will ensure that any contractors or Volunteer Workers employed to carry out work on behalf of the Council have adequate and appropriate Public Liability insurance.

4.2 Contractors and Volunteer Workers will report to the Clerk or any nominated Councillor any hazard or situation encountered during their work, which may affect members of the public.

4.3 Employees, Contractors and Volunteers should:

1. Seek advice on safety and health matters from the Clerk.

2. Make proper use of protective clothing and safety equipment provided.

3. Report immediately to the Clerk any defects in plant, structures, equipment or safety procedures which come to their notice.

4. Report promptly to the Clerk any incidents which have led or might lead to injury or damage and co-operate with any investigation which might be undertaken with the object of preventing accidents or re-occurrence of incidents.

4.4 Employees and volunteers are reminded that they have a duty to care for their own safety and that of other workers and other persons who might be affected by their activities and to co-operate with the Council so as to enable it to carry out its own responsibilities successfully. The final level of responsibility is, however, that of each and every individual.

4.5 A copy of this statement will be issued to all Council employees and Councillors. It will be revised added to or modified from time to time.

5. Roads and footpaths

5.1 The Parish Council is responsible for monitoring the safety of roads and footpaths in its area, and will promptly report any hazards that are brought to its attention to the appropriate authorities for further action.

6. Environment

6.1 The Parish Council will ensure that, as far as possible, the Parish remains a safe and pleasant environment for its residents.

6.2. The Parish Council will obtain specialist technical and Health and Safety advice for any projects or pieces of work that could affect the general public.

6.3 The Council will ensure that any work activities carried out on its behalf do not unreasonably jeopardize the Health and Safety of the general public.

7. Risk assessment

7.1 The Parish Council will carry out a risk assessment of all its activities and review this annually.

7.2 The Council will set up and monitor policies and procedures to reduce any risks that are identified. 8. Council Safety Officer 8.1 The Clerk, as the appointed Safety Officer will:

o Assume the day-to-day responsibility of ensuring the safety policy is reviewed, maintained, regularly reviewed and adhered to.

o Ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out of working practices, with subsequent consideration and review of any necessary corrective/protective measures. Maintain a file of risk assessments, summarised in the Minutes.

o Make effective arrangements to ensure those contractors or voluntary helpers working for the Council comply with all reasonable Health and Safety at Work requirements. All contractors will be given a copy of the Council's Accident Reporting Policy and Procedures.

o Maintain a record of notified accidents. o When an accident or hazardous incident occurs, take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.

o Act as the contact and liaison point for the Health and Safety

o Inspectorate and obtain specialist technical advice and assistance on matters of Health and Safety where necessary.

9. Review of the policy

9.1. This policy was adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 18 March 2024 and will be reviewed in March 2025 and annually thereafter

PROTOCOL FOR REPORTING OF CHILTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Except where members of the public have been excluded due to the confidential nature of the business, any person may film, photograph, audio record or use social media to report on meetings of the Council, or a committee, including any public participation session.

2. Reporting is restricted by legislation to the proceedings of the meeting, in other words from calling to order to the official closure of the meeting.

3. In accordance with Government guidelines, Council policy does not permit the filming or photographing of persons under the age of eighteen or vulnerable adults without permission of a responsible adult. Any persons who object to being filmed or photographed and have moved to an area designated for this purpose should also not be filmed or photographed. However, the Council cannot guarantee that anyone will not be filmed or photographed.

4. Any person intending to report should give notice before the commencement of the meeting to the Clerk or Chairman of the Council. This will enable reasonable facilities to be afforded.

5. A notice indicating that meetings may be reported by use of filming etc. will be displayed at the meeting venue and a statement about reporting will also be included in relevant notices of meetings.

6. At the start of each meeting, the Chairman will announce that proceedings may be filmed, photographed or recorded and invite any members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed to move to the designated area.

7. Any filming or recording of meetings should be conducted overtly from a fixed point in an area of the meeting room specified by the Clerk or Chairman.

8. Live oral commentary will not be permitted at any time.

9. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless agreement has been reached in advance of the meeting.

10. Recordings will not be made for reporting by the Council or any other person during any part of the meeting when the public and press are excluded.

11. Persons reporting on a meeting who act improperly or in a disruptive manner could be excluded from the meeting. 'Disruptive behaviour' would include any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting or impedes other members of the public from being able to see, hear or film etc., the proceedings. This might include:
    - Moving outside designated public areas
    - Excessive noise during debate
    - Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography
    - Asking people to repeat for the purpose of recording

12. Those reporting on meetings should not edit the recordings, films or photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed, filmed or recorded.

13. Recording and reporting the council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those recording and reporting to ensure compliance, including data protection and defamation. They will be responsible for any allegations of breaches of the law which may result from their use of recorded material and are admitted to the Council Meeting on the basis that they accept this responsibility. The Council reserves the right to initiate legal proceedings in appropriate circumstances.

14. The Council takes no responsibility for any recording made by others. It also takes no responsibility where a recording which it makes is subsequently used by any third party. Any third party making or editing a recording of a meeting shall in doing so be taken to have indemnified the Council against all actions, proceedings, costs, claims, demands, liabilities, losses and expenses whatsoever relating to the making or use of that recording.

15. The Council asserts no copyright or control over recordings of meetings made by itself or others whilst on Council premises, subject to paragraph 12 above.

16. Generally, archived recordings made by the Council will be available on request.

This protocol was adopted by Chilton Parish Council on 5th January 2015

Safeguarding Policy

This policy will enable Chilton Parish Council to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe both vulnerable adults and children and young people in the community. Policy Statement The policy is in place in order for councillors to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable Chilon Parish Council to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing the abuse is supported. Definitions Child “Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday”. Children Act 1989. Adults at Risk An individual who “Have needs for care and support, is experiencing, or at risk of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect”. Care Act 2014. Related Policies This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the following Parish Council policies: Equality and Diversity, Data Protection, Working with Volunteers, Complaints Policy and any others deemed appropriate. Responsibilities of the Parish Council
- To accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a Duty of Care for children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse.
- To raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing and identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that all councillors, volunteers and any paid members of staff are familiar with the policy and any associated procedures.
- To work with other agencies within the framework of both the Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) and the Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB).
- To act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adults before sharing information about them with another agency. The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent.
- To make a safeguarding referral to Customer First1 as appropriate i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
- To ensure that all new Councillors are provided with a copy of the safeguarding policy.
- To ensure all contractors/partners working directly with the Parish Council meets the safeguarding standards as expected by the Parish Council (A copy of the safeguarding policy must be given to any contractor/partner).
- To require all Councillors/volunteers and anyone paid to adopt and abide by this safeguarding policy and to understand their responsibilities therein.
- To monitor and evaluate the policy annually or in the light of any changes to Government legislation and guidance.
- To ensure there is a designated lead person for safeguarding in the Parish Council.
- To ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that everyone is safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides or facilitates.
- DBS checks will be required if any Councillor, volunteer of paid member of staff is required is required to teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children.
- To ensure records are kept of any referrals and any notes, records of conversations concerning that referral are kept in the folder and that it is stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people. Responding to Abuse or an Allegation
- Reassure the person concerned.
- Listen to what they are saying.
- Record what they are saying.
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed probing questions.
- Use the vulnerable adult’s/child’s words where possible.
- Don’t promise to keep it a secret.
- Tell the child or vulnerable adult what you are going to do next to get help to keep him/her safe.

- Comply with the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy.

Types of Abuse

There are four main types of abuse:
physical abuse,
emotional abuse,
sexual abuse and
neglect.
It is important to note that self-neglect is part of neglect.

Allegations Made Against a Councillor/Volunteer/Paid Member of Staff should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead. If appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead will consult with/make a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The procedures for LADO referrals can be found on the LSCB/SAB websites. http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/ https://www.suffolkas.org/

Designated Lead Cllr. [TBC] c/o Chilton Parish Council

Making a Referral Please dial 999 if the person is in immediate danger.

For Concerns about a Child Complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) online: http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk

/ or telephone Customer First on 0808 800 4005. For Concerns about an Adult Click on the 'Make a Referral' button on the Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board website https://www.suffolkas.org/ or telephone Customer First on 0808 800 4005. For advice regarding a referral, professionals can contact the MASH Professional Consultation Line on 0345 606 1499.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

Chilton Parish Council is committed to ensuring its Councillors and staff are trained to the highest standard and kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget each year to enable staff and councillors to attend training and conferences relevant to their office. Prospective Councillors and applicants for the post of Clerk should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations placed upon them contained within it.

2 Policy Statement

The Council is committed to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to residents professionally. To that end the Council's intention is that Councillors, Clerk and any other workers of the Council are suitably equipped with knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices. The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work.

3 Training and Development Activity

The Council consists of seven elected Councillors and employs one part-time Parish Clerk. In addition, volunteers from within the parish provide invaluable support for its work. Training and development for each of these groups will be regularly reviewed but will contain as a minimum requirement:

3.1 For Councillors

a. Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of Councillors
b. Provision of an Councillor Information Handbook containing copies of the Standing orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant
c. Access to relevant courses provided by bodies such as the *Suffolk Association of Local Councils* (SALC).
d. Expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for Councillors in Suffolk
e. Circulation of documentation such as briefings and newsletters/magazines

3.2 For the Clerk

a. Induction session explaining the role of the Clerk
b. Provision of copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant.
c. Completion of the Introduction to Local Council Administration course or similar.
d. Gaining the *Certificate in Local Council Administration* (CiLCA) within 12 months of appointment (this is a condition of employment) in order to retain Quality Parish Council status and the General Power of Competence.
e. Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as IT, Legal powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs assessments.
f. Attendance at relevant local meetings of bodies such as the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and briefings by SALC.
g. Subscription to relevant publications and advice services.
h. Provision of *Local Council Administration* by Paul Clayden and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council.
i. Arranging mentoring opportunities with suitably qualified Clerks from neighbouring parishes.
j. Regular feedback from the Chairman of the Council in their performance.

3.3 For Volunteers on Parish Council activities

a. Briefings on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting.
b. Assessment of their skill, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand.
c. Briefing on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council.
d. Training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is necessary for their role.

4. Training needs identification

4.1 Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman and Clerk. Opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the full council.

4.2 Annually, the Council will formally review the training needs of Councillors and the Clerk at a meeting of the Parish Council.

4.3 Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for new clerks, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisal. The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required.

5. Resourcing Training

5.1 Annually, an allocation will be made in the budget each year as required to enable reasonable training and development.

5.2 Annually, the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks, Institute of Local Council Management and Suffolk Association of Local Councils to enable the Clerk and Councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

5.3 Purchases of relevant resources such as publications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

6. Evaluation and review of training

6.1 All training undertaken will be subsequently evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Any additional training needs highlighted as a result will be brought into the training identification process in section 4 above.

6.2 Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any quality systems relevant to the Council; new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs and requests from Councillors, the Clerk or volunteers.

6.3 The Clerk will maintain a record of training attended by themselves and Councillors.

This policy was adopted by Chilton Parish Council on 5th January 2015