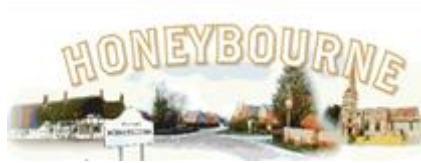


HONEYBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL



Public Notice of Meeting

Summons to Staffing Committee Members

The meeting of the Staffing Committee will be held at Honeybourne Sports (Pavilion)
Bretforton Road, Honeybourne
1st August 2023, at 7:30pm

The meeting is open to the press and members of the public who are welcome to attend all or part of the meeting, there will be no opportunity for members of public to speak at this meeting

AGENDA

SC-001 Election of Committee Chairman

SC-002 To receive and note any council member's apology for absence

SC-003 Declarations of Interest: Councillors are reminded that to ensure transparency and retain public confidence in the council's decisions they are required to -

- a) Keep their Register of Interests form up to date;
- b) Declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and any Other Disclosable Interests (ODI) in agenda items and the nature of those interests.

SC-004 To consider any dispensations

Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation to a councillor (as per Localism Act 2011, s33) must be with the Clerk before the meeting starts.

SC-005 To consider the Staffing Terms of reference.

SC-006 To approve the following draft policies

- I. Grievance Policy and procedure
- II. Disciplinary Policy and procedure
- III. Officer and Members Protocol
- IV. Dignity at Work
- V. Equal Opportunity Policy
- VI. Equality and Diversity Policy
- VII. Health and Safety Policy
- VIII. Homeworking Policy
- IX. Lone Worker Policy
- Communications
- X. Press and Media Policy
- XI. Facebook Policy
- XII. Social Media Policy

SC-007 Date of next meeting.

Linda Stanton
Parish Clerk
19th July 2023

Staffing Committee Members:
Cllrs A Attridge, G Clelland, H Jobses & C Steward

Staffing Committee

To provide effective and professional staff management of all matters related to the employees of the Parish Council. To be mindful of the confidential nature of employer- employee matters and that many items for consideration will require that the public and press be excluded by resolution of the Committee.

Membership	4 Parish Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 members to form an interview panel• 3 members to form the review panel• 3 members to form the appeal panel Membership will be selected annually at the first meeting of the Council year
Quorum	3 Parish Councillors
Committee Meetings	Once every quarter and ad- hoc as required
Staffing Meeting	Bi- annually
Spending limit	Council agreed training budgets

Terms of Reference

1. Progress staff recruitment when required.
2. Confirm individual contract of employment and all terms and conditions
3. Make arrangements for annual appraisal of the Parish Clerk's performance by the Chairman by resolution of this committee and, if required, take any necessary action.
4. Decide on annual salary awards.
5. Consider any matters arising in response to the council's grievance and disciplinary procedure and act accordingly.
6. Appoint an Appeals Panel and its Chairman, when required by the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. If a grievance has been raised against a council member, that member will be excluded from membership of both Staffing Committee and Appeals Panel.
7. Clarify the Terms of Reference for the Appeal Panel, which will include the requirement that all recommendations are directed in the first instance to the Staffing Committee.
8. Consider recommendations from the Appeal Panel and act accordingly.
9. Alter these Terms of Reference if there is insufficient number of 'untainted' members to form an Appeal Panel.
10. To manage long term sickness and incidents at work in line with the Council's agreed policies.
11. Review all policy issues relating to staff on biennial basis.
12. **Reporting Procedures**

The Staffing Committee Chairman shall be responsible for bringing forward reports to the Council meeting following the Committee Meeting to update Council on issues or action taken.

The Chairman and the Parish Clerk shall ensure that any specific matter which requires the consent of Council shall be placed on the Council Agenda as a separate item.

Staffing Committee members are reminded of:

1. The legal framework that exists for good practice in employment matters;
2. The confidential nature of employer/employee matters and that items for consideration may require the committee to resolve to exclude the press and public from meeting;
3. The national negotiated (NALC and ALCC) model contracts and terms and conditions for the employment of the Parish Clerk, adherence to which Honeybourne Parish Council has agreed;
4. The Member- Officer Protocol, available as a policy document; and other related staffing policies.
5. Staff management is facilitated by the understanding that Council Chairman is the Parish Clerk 'line manager' and the Parish Clerk manages all other staff, if any.

Review Date	
Status	
Minute number	
Date of next review	

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

DRAFT

1.	Introduction
	<p>This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice (http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174). It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. (https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf). 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. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.</p>
1.1	<p>Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.</p>
1.2	<p>This policy confirms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for his /her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case. • Where an employee is the sole employee, and is not a member of a trade union, the Council will agree to the employee being accompanied by a friend or family member. • The Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date. • Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council. • An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final. • Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) • Audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition. • If an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure. • If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if he/she raised the grievance in good faith;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties • Employees can use all stages of the grievance procedure If the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure (paragraph 4) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a councillor Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. If the complaint about the councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of Wychavon District Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure (see paragraph 5) • If the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination. • If an employee considers that the grievance concerns his or her safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with his or her line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime.
2.	Informal grievance procedure
2.1	The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with his/her manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with his/her manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chairman of the staffing committee or, if appropriate, another member of the staffing committee. If the employee's complaint is about a councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the councillor's consent.
3.	Formal grievance procedure
3.1	If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the staffing committee.
3.2	The staffing committee will appoint a sub-committee of three members to hear the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.
3.3	If the sub-committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to

	establish the facts of the case. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, councillors or members of the public).
3.4	The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the sub-committee.
4.	Notification
4.1	<p>Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The names of its Chairman and other members. • The date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance. • The employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. • A copy of the Council's grievance policy. • Confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting. • Confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice. • Findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation. • An invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).
5.	The Grievance Meeting
5.1	<p>At the grievance meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee. • The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence. • The Chairman will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action he/she wants the Council to take. • Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness. • A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.
5.2	The Chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, usually within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.
6.	The Appeal
6.1	If an employee decides that his/her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, he/she may submit a written appeal to the staffing committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.

6.2	<p>Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy • The decision was not supported by the evidence • The action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate • New evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
6.3	<p>The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of three Council members who may include members of the staffing committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.</p>
6.4	<p>The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.</p>
6.5	<p>At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the panel members to the employee. • Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the staffing sub-committee. • Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
6.6	<p>The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.</p>
6.7	<p>The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.</p>
6.8	<p>The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the staffing committee or substitute its own decision.</p>
6.9	<p>The decision of the appeal panel is final.</p>

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees of the council to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance.
- 1.2 This procedure applies to all employees and workers the Council may employ including on a voluntary basis. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all employees and workers employed by the Council.

2 Principles

- 2.1 It is anticipated that minor breaches of discipline will be dealt with informally by discussion between the employee or worker concerned and their immediate Line Manager. This may be at a planned supervision meeting, or immediately upon attention being drawn to the issue/matter.
- 2.2 The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently and fairly with disciplinary issues, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee or worker, until the facts of the case have been appropriately investigated.
- 2.3 In some cases, this will require the holding of an investigatory meeting with the employee or worker before proceeding to any disciplinary hearing. In other cases, the investigatory stage will be the collation of evidence by the employer for use at any disciplinary hearing.
- 2.4 At every stage of the formal procedure the employee or worker will be informed in writing of what is alleged and can state their case at a disciplinary hearing before any decision on action is made.
- 2.5 For formal action the employee or worker will be advised in writing of the nature of the complaint against him or her and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made at a disciplinary hearing.
- 2.6 At any stage of the procedure an employee or worker may be accompanied, if they wish, by representative of their choice limited to a workplace colleague or if in a Union a full-time Trade Union Official or an appropriate trained Union Representative.
- 2.7 The disciplinary panel may be accompanied by an HR contractor to the Council to advise on procedure and who will record the notes of the disciplinary hearing.
- 2.8 Employees or workers will be provided, where appropriate, with written notice copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing. At all

stages of the formal procedure the employee should be provided with 5 working days' notice of a hearing date and of the right to be accompanied.

2.9 No employee will normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty may be summary dismissal.

2.10 The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this.

3 Disciplinary Procedure

3.1 Informal stage

Where the employee's /worker's conduct, behaviour or performance is falling below expectations, whether it is due to the employee doing something wrong unintentionally or failing to undertake the requirements of their job role. The immediate Line Manager will clarify the breaches in the employee/worker or where the employee's/worker's performance is falling below the necessary standard as determined by the Line Manger.

It may need to be determined if there are any mitigating circumstances, training needs or a requirement for additional support. The improvements required will be agreed with the employee along with timescales over which the necessary improvements will be monitored. In cases where such discussions does not lead to the required improvement, or there has been a further breach of discipline, or where the matter is more serious and cannot be dealt with in an informal way, the following stages of the Formal Disciplinary Procedure should be followed.

3.2 Mediation

Before resorting to the formal procedures and if considered more appropriate both parties may agree to resolving the matter through a process of mediation/conciliation. Mediation is a tool to deal with disagreements between individuals in the workplace. It is a voluntary process that the Parish Council can use to help resolve conflict. Mediation is a form of alternative or informal dispute resolution as it is less formal than disciplinary procedures. Where both parties agree to mediation the Council will seek the services of an external expert to organise the mediation process to reach a conclusion agreeable to all parties involved in the employment issue. Honeybourne Parish Council follows the guidance from ACAS for mediation latest guidance can be found at <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

3.3 First stage of formal procedure

This will normally be either:

- **An improvement note for unsatisfactory performance**

If performance does not meet acceptable standards, this will set out the performance problem, the improvement that is required, the timescale any help that may be given and the right of appeal.

The individual will be advised that it constitutes the first stage of the formal procedure. A written record of the improvement note will be given to the

employee/worker and a copy kept for six months on the employee's/worker's file, but will then be considered spent subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory performance or;

- **A first warning for misconduct if conduct does not meet acceptable standards**
This will be confirmed in writing and issued within 7 days of the hearing and set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour is required and the right of appeal. The warning will also inform the employee that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. A copy of the letter will be kept on the employee's personnel file, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of six months.

3.4 Final written warning

If the offence is sufficiently serious, (for example because it is having, or is likely to have, a serious harmful effect on the reputation of the Council), it may be justifiable to move directly to a final written warning, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve performance during the currency of a prior warning, a final written may be given to the employee/worker.

The final written warning will be issued within 7 working days and give details of the Complaint, the improvement required and the timescales. It will also warn that failure to improve may lead to dismissal (or some other action short of dismissal) and will refer to the right of appeal. That the final written warning be kept on their employee's/worker's file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after twelve months' subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct or performance.

3.5 Dismissal or other sanction

If the offence is a matter of Gross Misconduct or if there is still further misconduct or failure to improve performance the final step in the procedure may be dismissal or some other action short of dismissal.

Delegated authority, by the Council, to take disciplinary action under these disciplinary procedures, including dismissal decision, are set out in the attached **Appendix 1**. An employee/worker if dismissed will be provided in writing with reasons for dismissal within 7 days of the hearing, the date on which the employment will terminate, and their right of appeal.

If some sanction short of dismissal is imposed, the employee will receive a letter confirming the action within 7 working days after the hearing, warning the employee that dismissal could still result if there is no satisfactory improvement, and will be advised of the right of appeal. A copy of the action imposed will be recorded on the employee's/worker's personal file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after eighteen months' subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct of performance.

If performance or conduct does not improve during the currency of the warning or there is a further breach of discipline, then the hearing will be reconvened, and action escalated to dismissal.

4 Examples of actions that could lead to disciplinary action

4.1 General Breaches

The following are examples (although not an exhaustive list) of actions which are liable to lead to disciplinary action against an employee:-

- failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- poor time keeping;
- misuse of the Council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet (Tweet, Facebook or other social media) that could bring Council's name into disrepute;
- inappropriate behaviour
- refusal to follow reasonable instructions or follow the Council's policies or procedures;
- making covert recording in the workplace;
- unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of the Council's property;
- any criminal convictions or offence that has a detrimental impact on the performance of your duties or the name of the Council;
- if your work involves driving, failure to report immediately any type of criminal conviction, or any summons which may lead to your conviction or could damage the Council's reputation;
- loss of driving licence where driving on public roads forms an essential part of the duties of the post.

4.2 Serious Misconduct

- Is an instance of unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to the employee/worker's extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon the Council's operations or reputation. Employees/workers may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.
- Employees/workers may receive a final written warning as the first course of action if upon investigation it is shown that some level of mitigation is treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

4.3 Gross Misconduct

Occurrence of gross misconduct will normally result in summary dismissal i.e. without pay in lieu of notice and without any previous warning being issued. Any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct include serious instances of:-

- theft or fraud
- physical violence or persistent bullying
- deliberate and serious damage to property
- serious misuse of an organisation's property name
- deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene materials
- serious insubordination
- persistent unlawful discrimination or harassment
- action/acts bringing the Council's name into serious disrepute
- seriously incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs

- causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence
- serious breach of health and safety rules
- a serious breach of confidence
- deliberate falsification of records

5 Suspension

- 5.1** If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may Suspend the employee while further investigation are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.
- 5.2** While on suspension, the employee/worker is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council need to make contact. The employee must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or to discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.
- 5.3** The employee/worker must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee/worker to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

6 Appeals

- 6.1** If an employee/worker wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision they must do so in writing to the Chair of the within 5 working days of receipt of the letter giving details of the formal disciplinary action taken. The letter of appeal should outline the grounds the grounds and reasons for appeal.
- 6.2** All appeals will be heard by individuals with delegated authority to hear appeals by the Council. This list is attached as **Appendix 2** to this procedure. At the appeal, any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed by the panel with delegated authority to hear the appeal and whose decision will be final.

7 Right of Representation

- 7.1** The statutory right is to be accompanied by a fellow worker, a Trade Union Representative, or and official employed by a Trade Union. A Trade Union Representative who is not employed official, must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany an employee/worker.
- 7.2** If the representative of choice is not available to attend the date set for the hearing another date should be agreed within the following 5 working days from the original hearing date. The employee/worker should notify the Chair of the Council 48 hours prior to the hearing who will accompanying them. The companion can help the employee/worker in presenting their case but cannot answer questions on the employee's/worker's behalf.

8 Retention of records

8.1 Warning will normally be disregarded after the periods below, subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct or improvement in behaviour and conduct.

Notes made during the informal stage	6 Months
First formal written warning	6 Months
Final written warning	18 Months

9 Voice Recordings of Investigation, disciplinary and appeal meetings/hearings

9.1 It is not the Councils' practice to allow voice recordings in the workplace, which include investigation meeting and disciplinary/appeal hearings as it is believed that this is in breach of the implied terms of trust and confidence under the employment contract.

9.2 Making any covert recordings in the workplace will be treated as gross misconduct and appropriate action will be taken under The Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

10 Probationary and short-term contracts

10.1 The Council retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary misconduct procedures to take account of an employees/workers length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. Employees who are on short term or probationary contract may only be in receipt of a final written warning before dismissal, but employees will retain the right to formal disciplinary misconduct meetings and the right to appeal against the decision taken.

11 Grievance raised during a disciplinary process

11.1 The ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

<http://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures> state that a disciplinary process "may be suspended in order to deal with the grievance"

11.2 If the grievance is so bound up with the discipline it would not make sense to consider them separately as the grievance forms part of the defence to the charge, in such circumstances the Council will consider the merit in hearing and deciding them together. Where the Council decide to combine the grievance and disciplinary hearings, given that both sides should be allowed for additional preparation resulting from grievance being raised. In coming to a decision on whether to delay the disciplinary proceedings, the council will consider how long that delay is likely to be.

11.3 If there is no connection, between the grievance and the disciplinary issue the Council is not obliged to put the disciplinary process on hold while the grievance is raised is heard (including any appeal) and will arrange a separate meeting for the grievance to be heard.

Appendix 1

Delegated Authority from the Council for action under Disciplinary Procedure Review Panel

The operation of the disciplinary procedure is based on the following delegated authority for various levels of disciplinary action as detailed in the Terms of Reference of the Staffing Committee. However, the list does not prevent a higher level of seniority undertaking any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

IN THE CASE OF	PERSON AUTHORISED TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY
Informal action	Nominated Line Manager, Chairperson of the Council Staffing Committee
Final written warning	Chairperson of the Council Staffing Committee and two further Committee Members
Dismissal	Chairperson of the Council Staffing Committee and two further Committee Members

Appendix 2

Delegated Authority from the Council to hear Appeals

The operation of appeal is based on the following delegated authority for the various levels of Appeal Hearings and on the basis, that wherever possible the individuals hearing the Appeal would not have been previously involved in the disciplinary process.

APPEAL LEVEL	PERSON WHO WILL HEAR THE APPEAL
Written warning	Chairperson of the Council plus two council members not previously involved in the issue of a written warning and independent of the review panel.
Final written warning	Chairperson of the Council plus two council members not previously involved in the decision to issue a final written warning and independent of the review panel.
Dismissal	Appeal Panel made up of three council members not previously involved in the disciplinary process

Honeybourne Parish Council

Review Date	
Status	
Minute number	
Date of next review	

Member/ Officer Protocol

Guidance for an effective working relationship based on Mutual Respect and Understanding

Protocol for Member/Officer Relationship

1	Introduction
1.1	<p>The purpose of this protocol is to guide Members and officer of the Council in their relationship with one another. It is hoped the Protocol will help build and maintain good working relationship between Members and Officers as they work together.</p> <p>Employees who are required to give advice to members are referred to as “Officer” throughout.</p>
1.2	A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between Members and Officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council.
1.3	<p>It is recognised that relationships between Members and Officers are very varied and can often be complex. Therefore, this Protocol does not seek to be prescriptive or comprehensive and may not cover all situations. However, it is hoped that the framework it provides will serve as a guide to dealing with a wide range of circumstances. This Protocol is to a large extent no more than a statement of current practice and convention. In some respects, however, it seeks to promote greater clarity and certainty.</p>
1.4	This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct which apply to Members and Officers. The shared object to those codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of Local Government and they therefore demand very high standards of personal conduct.
1.5	<p>The principles underlying the Protocol are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selflessness -serving only the public interest. • Honesty and integrity – not allowing these to be questioned; not behaving improperly. • Objectivity – taking decision on merit. • Accountability – to the public; being open to scrutiny. • Openness- giving reasons for decisions. • Personal judgement – reaching one’s own conclusions and acting accordingly • Respect for others- promoting equality; avoiding discrimination; respecting others (Member/ member, as well as Member/officer and officer/officer) • Duty to uphold the law- not acting unlawfully • Stewardship- ensuring the prudent use of a council’s resources. • Leadership – acting in a way which retains the public confidence.
1.6	Both Councillor and Officers serve the public and they are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors decide policy for Council and Officers give effect to Council policies.
2	Members
2.1	Mutual respect between Councillors and Officers is essential to good Local Government. It is important that any dealings between Members and

	Officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.
2.2	In line with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, a councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council.
2.3	<p>Officers can expect members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the Council; • to work constructively in partnership with Officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities; • to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines; • to give political leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that Members have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice; • to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy; • to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality; • to recognise that Officers do not work under the instruction of individual members or group; • not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure; • to treat all Officers, partners (those external people with whom the council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation; • not to request officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the council's policies and procedures; • not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the council or in their role as a councillor without proper and lawful authority; • not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly; • to comply at all times with the councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the council.

2.6	<p>It is important that Members of the Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect the impartiality of officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties; • do not ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or give rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a party- political manner; • do not ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given in law, by the council or their managers; • do not raise concerns about an employee in a public setting and to raise such concerns in an appropriate manner in accordance with Council policy; • remember that Parish Council officers are employed by the whole council and not by any individual member.
4	Officers
4.1	The primary role of Officers is to advise, inform and support all Members and to implement the lawfully agreed policies of the Council.
4.2	Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the Council. Members should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.
4.3	In performing their role Officers will act professionally, impartially and with political neutrality. Whilst Officers will report a Member's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to his professional judgement or views.
4.3	<p>Officers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement decisions of the Council and its subordinate bodies which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Council's constitution are duly recorded; • work in partnership with Members in an impartial and professional manner; • assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions; • respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's standards; • be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for Members, the media or other sections of the public; • act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times; • provide support and learning and development opportunities for Members to help them in performing their various roles; • not seek to use their relationship with Members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comply, at all times, with the policies and procedures approved by the Council.
4.4	Officers have the right not to support Members in any role other than that of Member, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol. In particular, there is a statutory limitation on Officers' involvement in political activities.
4.5	<p>A Member who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the Officer at all times; • ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive; • ensure that any criticism is made in private; • take up the concern with the appropriate Officer;
5	The Relationship: General
5.1	Members and Officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Members are accountable to the Public, whereas Officers are accountable to the Council as a whole.
5.2	At the heart of the Codes, and this Protocol, is the importance of mutual respect. Member/Officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between Members and Officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party.
6	Members' Access to Information and to Council Documents
6.1	Members are free to approach any Officer to provide them with information, explanation and advice about their functions as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as Members of the Council. This can range from a request for general information to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Officer concerned.
6.2	The legal rights of Members to inspect Council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.
6.3	The common law right of members is based on the principle that any members have prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.
6.4	The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the member's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.
6.5	In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a member's "need to know" will normally be presumed.

6.6	In other circumstances (e.g. a member's wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a member will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a member must only be used by the member for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the member's duties as a member of the council.
6.7	The Code of Conduct states that a member must not disclose confidential information or information which he or she believes to be of a confidential nature.
6.8	For completeness, members do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
7	Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees
7.1	Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other members do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.
7.2	Whilst the Chair will routinely be consulted as part of the process of drawing up the agenda for a forthcoming meeting, it must be recognized that in some situations an officer will be under a duty to submit a report on a particular matter. It is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. Whilst an officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue, if the Councillor wishes to express a contrary view he/she should not seek to pressure the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view.
7.3	It is important to remember that the law allows for decisions (relating to the discharge of any of the Council's functions) to be taken only by the Council, Committee of the Council or an Officer.
7.4	The Council's delegation scheme and resolutions passed at Committee meetings may authorise named Officers to take action in consultation with one or more members such as the Chair and Vice- Chair of the council or of a committee.
8	Correspondence
8.1	Correspondence between an individual Councillor and an Officer should not normally be copied (by the Officer) to any other Councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another Councillor, this should be made clear to the original Councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed. Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear on emails if another Councillor has received an e-mail by adding "cc Councillor x."
8.2	Official letters or emails on behalf of the Council should normally be sent out over the name of the appropriate Officer, rather than over the name of a Councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter or email to appear

	over the name of a Councillor, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a Councillor.
8.3	Correspondence to individual Councillors from Officers concerning regulatory matters such as planning, enforcement, licensing and environmental health matters should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked “confidential”. This is to avoid recriminations and allegations of unfair treatment.
9	Press Comments and Press Releases
9.1	For more detailed information regarding the role of Councillor in connection with the issue of press releases, reference should be made to the Council’s Media Protocol. Any press releases issued by the Parish Council should relate to Parish Council business.
9.2	The Parish Clerk or nominated representatives may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an Officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.
9.3	Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the Council’s position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals’ complaints should be “signed off” by the Clerk after consultation with the Chair or, if not available, the Vice- Chair.
10	If Things go wrong:
10.1	<p>Procedure for officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From time to time relationship between members and the officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is important that the council adopts a formal grievance procedure. • The law requires all employees to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. Adopting a grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way. • Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of councillors’ Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council’s monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Council may however try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.
11	Procedure for Members:
11.1	If a member is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the officer in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the council’s disciplinary procedure.

Honeybourne Parish Council

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Honeybourne Parish Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all councillors, officers and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the council.

Purpose

Honeybourne Parish Council is committed to creating a working environment where all council employees, councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by clerks and all employees engaged to work at Honeybourne Parish Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with Honeybourne Parish Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the Chair of the Council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the council the complaint should be raised to the staffing committee but excluding the Chair should he/she be of the staffing committee.

Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and the council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the council's grievance policy.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, councillor), however, the council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Honeybourne Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or

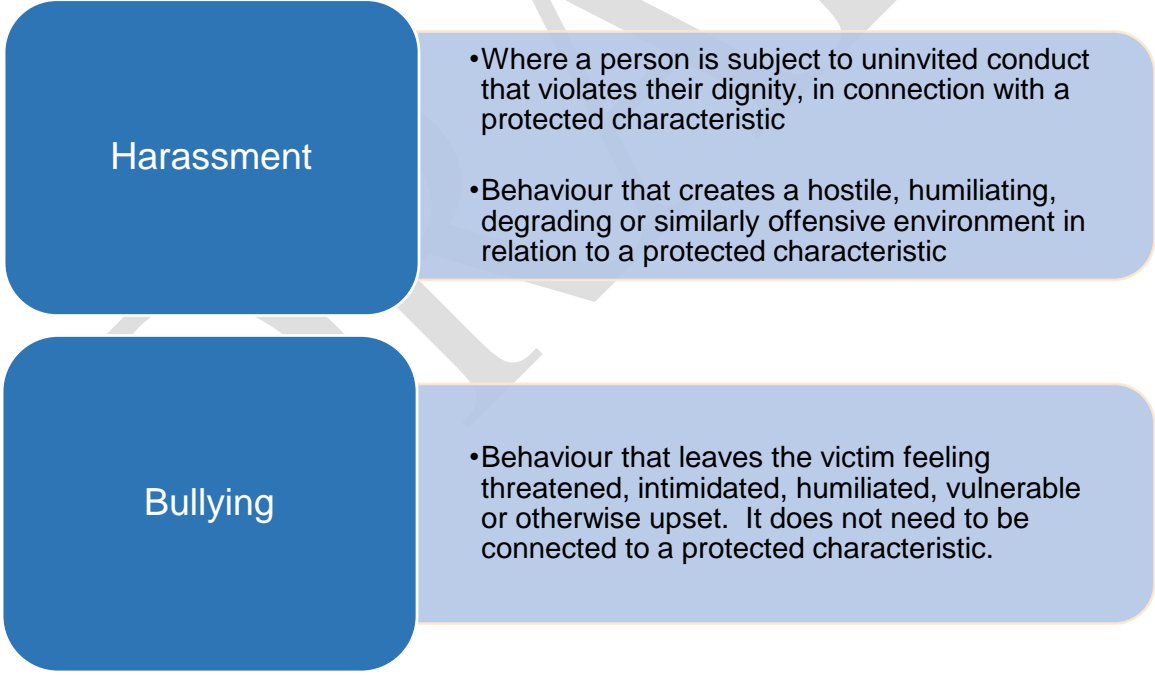
not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of the council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people’s feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the council’s disciplinary procedure.



What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

‘Bullying’ or ‘harassment’ are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances

- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear, however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). See the council's equality and diversity Policy.

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines, and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or, with the clerk/or a councillor. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor: If you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor, please raise this with the clerk/chief officer or the chair of the council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying: If you witness such behaviour you should report the incident in confidence to the clerk/chief officer or a councillor. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff: If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the clerk/chief officer, your nominated manager or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the chair of the council. (If your concern relates to the chair, you should raise it with the chair of the personnel/staffing committee). The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the council's grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint to the clerk/chief officer or the chair of the council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The clerk/chief officer or the chair of the council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the grievance policy. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. The council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the grievance policy for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the grievance procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the grievance procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Review Date	
Status	
Minute number	
Date of next review	

Equal Opportunities Policy

1.	Introduction
1.1	<p>Honeybourne Parish Council (the Council) recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Age ii. Disability iii. Religion or belief iv. Sex v. Sexual Orientation vi. Marriage and Civil Partnership vii. Gender Reassignment viii. Race ix. Pregnancy and Maternity <p>Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”</p>
2.	Policy Aims
2.1	Honeybourne Parish Council’s intention is to be an effective Equal Opportunities organisation. This means it will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone has equal access, and is treated with respect, in relation to employment opportunities, to its services and to all activities.
3.	As an Employer
3.1	Honeybourne Parish Council provides equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010
3.2	All employees are required to treat one another with mutual respect. Actions, behaviour and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual, irrespective of the position they have within the organisation.
3.3	Honeybourne Parish Council makes every effort to create a workplace where individuals are valued, listened to and treated with respect.
3.4	Honeybourne Parish Council maintains a work environment that seeks out and values, insight, experience, contribution and full participation of all staff.
3.5	Harassment and discrimination in any form is unacceptable behaviour and offenders will be subject to disciplinary action.
4.	The Council’s Commitment as an Equal Opportunities Employer
4.1	All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.
4.2	Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the Council.
4.3	Breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
4.4	Honeybourne Parish Council aims to achieve fulfilment as an Equal Opportunities Employer by:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring its employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to each other, the customer and the organisation regarding equal opportunities issues; providing a way in which individuals can communicate any concerns via competent named personnel; treating any unacceptable behaviour seriously; ensuring all Managers/Members realise they have a key role in implementing this policy and are expected to take personal responsibility in ensuring its success; providing awareness training for all employees and Councillors, ensuring opportunities to develop relevant competencies are available to implement the policy; meeting the commitments and living the aims of being a “Positive about Discrimination” employer.
5.	As a Service Provider
5.1	Honeybourne Parish Council will strive to ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made accessible to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination.
5.2	All service users will be treated with respect. Actions, behaviour and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual.
5.3	Honeybourne Parish Council will, wherever appropriate, work in partnership with other agencies in the area, including the county and district councils, voluntary groups and community organisations to promote equal opportunities.
5.4	Honeybourne Parish Council will ensure that all contractors directly supplying goods and services or executing works for, or on behalf of the Council, comply with this Council’s stated policy on equal opportunities.
6.	The Council’s Commitment to Equal Opportunities as a service provider
6.1	<p>Honeybourne Parish Council aims to achieve fulfilment as an Equal Opportunities Service Provider by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing training for all staff in equal opportunities awareness and customer care, emphasising equality of treatment in service delivery; ensuring that no member of the public is disadvantaged, or treated less favourably than others, in terms of access to Council services. Where the Council’s practice, policy or procedures are found to make access impossible or unreasonably difficult, it will take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to change these practices, policies or procedures; ensuring that, wherever practical, all public buildings and premises owned or managed by the Council are accessible to all. recognising the importance of communication in attaining equality and quality services, which are responsive to the needs of all local people, for example through the provision of information in large print on request; complying with all relevant legislation relating to discrimination and equality.
7.	Role of Councillors and Employees
7.1	All Councillors and employees are responsible for implementing the Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy. It is important that all individuals who are employed by the Council appreciate that they have a responsibility and a role to play in the provision of equal opportunities.
8.	Monitoring and review of Equal Opportunities
8.1	This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly. Other Personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in the Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that the

	council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities organisation.
8.2	Complaints from staff about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with as laid down in the Council's Grievance Procedures.
8.3	Complaints from members of the public about discrimination or unfair treatment will be dealt with through the Council's Complaint Procedure.

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Review Date	
Status	
Minute number	
Date of next review	

Equality and Diversity Policy

Honeybourne Parish Council is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and will promote equality of opportunity for everyone in employment, service delivery and volunteering.

The Parish Council completely supports all the principles of equal opportunities and declares opposition to any form of direct or indirect discrimination. The Parish Council recognises that it is the duty of all employees and councillors to accept personal equal opportunity. The statement sets out how the council will meet these commitments by working alongside everybody regardless of race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, sex or sexual orientation. All aspects of this policy apply to elected members.

The Parish Council will adhere to the five core values:

1. Equality Recognition: Everybody is of equal value and will be respected according to individual needs and abilities.
2. Reasonableness: To be fair, reasonable and just in all council activities.
3. Accessibility: Provide equal access for all employees, Councillors, volunteers, local residents and community stakeholders.
4. Empowerment: Helping individual take on responsibility so that they can influence and participate in the decision- making process.
5. Quality: Obtaining the highest standards in service delivery.

The Parish Council will:

- Ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio economic status or any other inappropriate distinction.
- Promote diversity and equality for all staff and value the contributions made by individuals and groups or people from diverse cultural, ethnic, social economic and distinctive status.

- Promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive working environment which affirms the equal and fair treatment of individuals in fulfilling their potential and does not afford unfair privilege to any individual or group.
- Challenge inequality and less favourable treatment at all times.
- Promote greater participation of underrepresented groups by encouraging positive action to address inequality.
- Promote an environment free from harassment and bullying on any grounds.
- Work towards the elimination of discrimination, direct or indirect and all forms of harassment.
- Ensure that individuals are treated equally with respect to their specific needs and there is consistency in the council's approach to working practices and conditions.
- Provide public information in a way that meets the needs of the requesting it.

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation and code of practice:

- Equal Pay Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- Gender reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act as amended in 2005
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Council's Code of Conduct
- The Council's Equality Policy

Equality & Diversity Statement

Honeybourne Parish Council believes in fairness, equality and value diversity.

The Parish Council will create a culture that celebrates diversity and welcomes difference; a place where everyone's right and dignity are respected.

The Parish Council will provide a work and social environment free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, and all forms of harassment and bullying. We want to achieve this for all our staff and councillors.

It is the Parish Council's policy to treat everyone as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality, national origins, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, family circumstances, political beliefs, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, trade union membership, age or any other unfair distinction in every interaction with our staff, councillors and residents.

The Parish Council are demonstrating our commitment to equality and diversity through our day-to-day actions, we want Honeybourne Parish Council to be a welcoming environment where individual difference is celebrated in the places we live and work.

Honeybourne Parish Council

Review Date	
Status	
Minute number	
Date of next review	

Health and Safety Policy

DRAFT

Introduction

It is the policy of Honeybourne Parish Council ("the Council") to comply with all UK legislation on health and safety by identifying those risks which pose a significant threat to the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others likely to be affected by its operations and to do everything that is reasonably practicable to:

- ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented and maintained to avoid or minimise such risks.
- ensure that all employees are formally advised of the risks to their health, safety and welfare and of the measures taken by the Council to avoid or minimise such risks.
- promote and provide a safe and healthy working environment.
- ensure that premises are safe and provide adequate amenities for all those who are likely to use them.
- provide safe means of access to and from places of work which are under the Council's control.
- ensure safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of all equipment, products and substances used in connection with the Council's operations.
- initiate and maintain safe plant and equipment and safe systems of work.
- conduct regular inspections to ensure that the safest possible environment and work methods are maintained.
- provide information, instruction and training enabling avoidance of hazards.
- periodically review council activities to ensure that this policy, procedures, risk assessments and control measures contained within continue to be up to date and relevant to the Council.
- employees have a duty to assist the Council in its health and safety objectives and it is essential that all staff/volunteers/members read the Health and Safety Policy and meet all the obligations imposed.
- staff must take all reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves or to other persons likely to be affected by their activities at work and to cooperate in meeting any duty or requirement imposed on the Council by any statutory provisions.
- staff must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided by the Council in the interest of health and safety.

Responsibilities and Management

The Parish Clerk will ensure that:

- adequate resources are available, that the policy is properly prepared, implemented throughout the Council's premises and is brought to the attention of Councillors and all employees/volunteers
- the policy is kept under review, so that changes and improvements are incorporated, and it remains relevant to all activities.
- all individuals with delegated health and safety roles are aware of their responsibility.

In respect of operations and / or areas under their control they:

- are aware that they are directly responsible for the health, safety and welfare of any person who may be affected by the Council' activities and are therefore accountable for any accidents, illness or incidents that may occur as a result thereof.
- ensure that they, and their staff (including new and temporary employees), are familiar with the hazards, risk assessments and the control measures implemented, and will actively encourage safety, and discipline any person who is in breach of the safety measures described.
- ensure that good housekeeping standards are maintained.

- act to:
 - a) correct or contain any deterioration in conditions, or new exposures which increase risks on the premises.
 - b) investigate any accident or incident, however minor.
- ensure that any risk improvement, recommendation relating to defects, housekeeping arrangements and reassessment of risks is implemented as quickly as possible.

In this undertaking the Parish Clerk is responsible for:

- fostering a positive culture within the Council towards health and safety.
- ensuring that all those under their control understand and comply with Council's safety policy provisions and that they are being effectively carried out and adhered to.
- inspecting machinery, equipment and structures regularly and if there are faults, preventing access by any person to the defective apparatus until the fault have been rectified.
- ensuring that all those under their control understand and comply with the Council's safety policy provisions for the use and maintenance of all safety/personal protective equipment, first aid, fire and welfare facilities.
- ensuring that employees are adequately instructed in the safe operation of equipment, machinery or apparatus.
- advising staff/volunteers of their responsibilities under this policy.
- communicating with all those under their control to ensure the effective dissemination of health and safety information and attending any meeting as required in respect of health and safety.
- ensuring that all persons under their control are given adequate instruction, information and training to carry out the health, safety and welfare requirements and responsibilities delegated to them and can effectively implement safe systems of work.
- arranging for incidents, accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences to be reported.
- ensuring that those under their control do not take unnecessary risks.
- assisting the Council in carrying out the identification of all hazardous activities together with all hazardous substances used, assisting the Council in carrying out risk assessments of such activities and substances and producing safe systems of work to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury to the worker or any other persons who could be affected by the work activity.

The Parish Clerk will be the nominated person with a duty to:

- ensure that the Parish Council is informed of all issues relating to the implementation of this policy and other significant health and safety matters.
- ensure that all personnel are aware of and instructed in, their responsibilities as imposed by health and safety legislation and the provisions of this policy.
- ensure that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 regarding:
 - a) the provision and maintenance of safe equipment and systems of work.
 - b) ensuring safe and risk-free use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
 - c) the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees/volunteers.
 - d) the provision of a safe place of work.
 - e) the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment for its employees together with adequate facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.
- ensure that statutory tests, inspection and maintenance is followed
- ensure that risk assessments are conducted (and reviewed annually) with copies being supplied to relevant personnel for implementation of control measures.
- ensure the provision of suitable personal protective equipment is available, issued and used where required, that it is suitably stored, maintained and that a programme is in place for replacement.
- ensure that fire precautions and fire-fighting equipment comply with current legislation and that

- all staff are aware of and conform to the Council's arrangements for fire precautions.
- ensure that reportable incidents are notified under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.
- ensure that all accidents and near misses are investigated, records made and data analysed to identify means of avoiding possible recurrence.
- ensure that accident and near miss information is reported to the appropriate council meeting with any remedial measures are acted upon.
- ensure that meetings with the enforcing authority and insurers are suitably managed and recommendations flowing there from are actioned.
- ensure that a positive health and safety culture is actively promoted throughout the workplace.
- keep themselves up to date with best practice in health and safety management.

Employee responsibilities (including volunteers)

Employees/volunteers have legal responsibilities (under Section 7 and 8 of the HSWA) which are to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions.
- co-operate with management to meet the Council's legal duties; and
- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare (e.g fire extinguishers, fire doors, safety devices, alarm systems, emergency exits, first aid kits and /or protective clothing or equipment)

Employees/volunteers must:

- a) refrain from actions (or omissions) which might endanger themselves, or others.
- b) use all equipment safely, including that provided for their personal protection.
- c) comply with all safety instructions or procedures.
- d) follow safe systems of work and ensure that all work equipment is used in a safe and responsible manner.
- e) report any defects in equipment or other dangers immediately, or as soon as it is safe to do so and any accident, injury or incident, however minor.
- f) co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents.
- g) be familiar with and comply with all safety procedures detailed in this policy document and with specific instructions on safety matters given verbally or in writing by a health and safety specialist who, although they may not be an employee of the Council, is recognized by it for the purposes of this policy.
- h) familiarize themselves with the local first aid and fire emergency evacuation procedures, which are posted on the back of doors and be prepared to comply with them in the event of an incident.

Accident/Incident Reporting

All accidents, industrial diseases and dangerous occurrences will be reported to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

Accidents to Employees

Employees must report all accidents immediately to their supervisor and if injury is involved, to a first aider will assess the seriousness of the injury and whether they can give appropriate treatment. If the injury is of a serious nature or if there is any doubt, the injured person will be sent to the nearest hospital for treatment.

After every accident however small, an entry must be made in The Accident Book for all accidents/injuries incurred at work. This is the responsibility of the employee. If, because of their injury, employees are incapable of making an immediate entry, then their manager, the first aider or a nominated person must make that entry.

If the accident/incident qualifies as reportable, then the Parish Clerk will ensure that the Enforcing Authority is notified and that form F2508/F2508A is completed.

Following any accident that requires treatment, the first aider will complete an accident report form and send a copy to the Parish Clerk who will carry out an accident investigation to identify if remedial action is necessary to prevent a recurrence. In the absence of a first aider contact 999.

Accidents to Non-Employees

All accidents to non-employees, i.e contractors, visitors or member of the public, who suffer injury as a result of either the Council's work activities or its provision of services to the general public should be reported immediately to a first aider/senior member of staff. Details of the accident must be recorded in the accident book and the procedure outlined above should be adopted.

The Parish Clerk will investigate all accidents to non-employees and will report their findings to the appropriate council meeting.

Near Miss or Damage Incident

All incidents resulting in damage to property, plant, equipment, etc. together with near misses should be reported to the Parish Clerk who will investigate, particularly if the incident could have caused personal injury.

Accident Book

The Accident Book will be kept by the Parish Clerk electronically.

Collation of Accident Data

The Parish Clerk is responsible for collecting and collating data concerning all incidents annually, whether they are reportable and whether they involve personal injury.

Consultation with Employees

Legislation requires all employees to consult their employees on health and safety matters. This helps to create a safe working environment and strengthens the Council's health and safety culture.

Consultation affords the opportunity to create health and safety awareness making a more efficient council reducing accidents, incidents and ill-health.

Contractors

The council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that only competent contractors are engaged. Prior to the engagement of any contractor working for the council, they will be required to provide supporting evidence covering:

- their arrangements for health and safety
- insurance documents
- how they achieve safe working practices.
- skills levels of staff (training records, qualifications etc)
- details of any prosecutions or enforcement notices issued against them.
- details of their accident /incident records.
- information on the controls they impose on any sub- contractors they may engage.
- contractors will be required to work under a permit- to – work system in particularly hazardous situations (hot work, live electrics etc) and comply with COSHH.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Whilst the nature of council business make it unlikely that staff will encounter hazardous substances in the workplace, it is recognised that some substances have the potential to cause ill-health. The council will ensure that such substances are assessed and that, so far as is reasonably practicable, will be replaced with suitable and less hazardous substances wherever possible.

Where the Council is aware that its staff may be visiting third-party premises where hazardous substances are present, the Council will seek relevant information from the third party which will be provided to the Council employee.

Completion of COSHH assessments will be carried out for those operations in which hazardous substances or materials are used, or places in which items are stored (including waste products) to identify and evaluate the risk associated with its use. Where necessary control measurements regarding storage and disposal and limit exposure to employees and others who may be affected by those operations.

The council will obtain supplier's safety data sheets for all substances used on site. These will be kept centrally by the Parish Clerk who will provide copies to H&S representatives and First Aiders when required.

An assessment will be carried out for new substances introduced into the workplace. COSHH assessments will be carried out by the Parish Clerk or by such other suitably qualified persons as directed.

A review of COSHH assessments and control measures will be undertaken as and when required ensuring that they remain appropriate and effective.

Information, instruction and training for all employees will be provided if necessary. Training will also be provided to any non-employees who may be exposed to hazardous substances.

No hazardous substances may be introduced to the workplace without the prior written approval of the Parish Clerk.

All contractors bringing chemicals or hazardous substances onto Council premises will be required to declare that they are doing so and to supply the Council with a copy of their COSHH assessments and appropriate safety data sheets.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Health risks to display screen operators may include postural problems and visual fatigue, in addition to the other hazards of the workplace, such as tripping over cables or carpets, lifting injuries e.g. picking up boxes of paper, etc.

Postural problems often manifest themselves in the form of back and neck ache as well as sprains and strains of such areas as fingers, hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders.

Contributory factors include:

- sitting in an immobile position for long periods.
- high rates of repetitive finger movements, with the wrists bent.
- poor circulation to the legs.
- pressure from the seat/chair upon the thighs caused by incorrectly adjusted seating.

Visual fatigue can result in eyestrain, headaches or other related symptoms and can be caused by:

- poor screen display, such as low contrast or flickering.
- high levels of ambient light compared to the screen display.
- reflections or glare.
- the need for a document holder.

To reduce the risks to DSE operators a formerly recorded assessment of each user workstation will be undertaken to identify and evaluate the risks associated with that workstation.

Employees will conduct assessments of their own workstation and will forward results to the council.

Where an assessment discloses potential problems for the employee, a second assessment will be undertaken by the Chairman or other suitably qualified person, and remedial action will be taken as necessary.

The Council will follow the advice contained in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 (DSE) and where assessment indicates a need, it will offer staff free eyesight tests and a contribution towards corrective spectacles. It will also provide footrests and document holders where a need is recognised, and the opportunity for staff to take rest-periods away from the workstation.

Workstation users will be provided with suitable training and information regarding their workstation and will be given a copy of HSE Guidance Note INDG 36 "Working with display screen equipment".

Electricity at Work

Fixed Wiring

In order to maintain the fixed wiring installation which supplies electrical sockets, lighting and other hard-wired equipment, the Council will follow the guidance contained in the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and BS 7671 which recommend that the system be inspected by a competent specialist electrical contractor at least once every five years.

Portable Appliances

All portable appliances will be given a thorough electrical test by a competent person on installation or commission and thereafter will be subject to further testing to be determined by the nature of the equipment and the use to which it is put. The frequency of such tests will be determined by reference to HSG 107 "Maintaining Portable and Transportable Electrical Equipment". At the very least, it will undergo a visual inspection every 12 months.

Electrical Contractors

The council will ensure that any electrical contractors employed to carry out electrical work on wiring or equipment are competent, belong to an appropriate body, e.g. NICEIC and comply with all relevant safety standards.

Electric Shock

If there is any accident involving electrical injury to an employee, a first aider should be summoned immediately.

General

Electrical equipment must not be tampered with. Employees should report loose wires or defects in equipment to the Parish Clerk who will decide what action to take.

Employees who wish to bring their own electrical equipment onto the Council's premises must not do so until they have obtained prior permission from the Parish Clerk.

Fire Safety

The council has a legal duty to safeguard employees and others against exposure to the hazards associated with fire. Exposure to fire can result in burns and inhalation of smoke, either of which can be fatal. Fires can also cause massive destruction to the building structure, services, equipment, and contents.

This section of the Health and Safety Policy defines the responsibilities and procedures that must be followed to ensure fire safety at work.

Training

- Employees will receive fire safety training at induction which will include:
- the means of escape from the premises.
- location of fire extinguishers.
- fire assembly points.

Fire Equipment/Extinguishers

Extinguishers can be found at fire points which are clearly signed. They are checked regularly by a competent contractor who services them on an annual basis.

Training in the use of extinguishers will be given as appropriate. All employees are instructed never to take unnecessary risks and only to fight a fire with equipment provided they have been trained to use the equipment and it is safe to do so.

Evacuation

A fire evacuation procedure is displayed on the notice board at the front and only exit from the building. For reference, the procedure is as follows:

- On being informed of a fire, all employees should evacuate the premises immediately, without stopping to pick up belongings. Staff should use the only exit and proceed to their designated assembly point as quickly as possible and await the roll call.
- Following evacuation, staff must not re-enter the building to collect personal belongings or leave the assembly area until told to do so by management, acting under instruction from the senior fire officer at the scene.
- Designated persons will check the premises to ensure that every employee and visitor is accounted for.

Fire Doors

All fire doors are suitably marked and should always be kept shut and clear of obstruction including the area immediately external to the fire exit. Any employee finding a fire door blocked or locked should report it immediately to the Parish Clerk.

Fire Alarm

Smoke detectors are provided throughout the office area and are regularly tested by the landlord (Honeybourne Village Hall).

At Honeybourne Sports Field Pavilion the smoke alarm is tested regularly by the Honeybourne Parish Council Handyman

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting conforms with fire safety legislation and is maintained and tested by the landlord. (Honeybourne Village Hall).

At Honeybourne Sports Field Pavilion the emergency lighting is tested annually by Council's Electrical Contractor.

Fire Risk Assessment

The council undertakes an assessment of the risks presented by fire ensuring appropriate control measures to minimise fire risk is identified.

These measures will include:

- a regular inspection for general fire safety.
- placing fire extinguishers at clearly labelled fire points.
- keeping emergency exit routes and signs clear at all times.
- training of nominated staff in the use of extinguishers, procedures for fire drills and evacuation.
- supervision and monitoring of visitors, including contractors.
- implementation of precautions in respect of disabled people.
- these arrangements will be reviewed annually and on any significant change.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees are reminded that:

- firefighting equipment must not be tampered with or removed under any circumstances; interfering with safety equipment is a criminal offence under S.8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- electrical equipment should be switched off at close of business wherever practicable.
- the fire exit route must always remain free from obstruction and fire doors and exits must not be locked or propped open.
- smoking is not permitted anywhere within the Council's premises.
- personal electrical equipment should not be used on the premises unless it has been authorised by the Chair
- all waste materials must be placed in the dustbin outside the pavilion or other designated receptacles provided.

First Aid

The council has a legal duty to make adequate provision for first aid in respect of employees should they sustain injury or become ill at work, including those travelling or working away from our premises. The council provide appropriate first-aid equipment to deal with the risks considering the size of the establishment, the hazards and risks involved in daily council activities.

First aid provision will be reassessed annually, or whenever there is a relevant change in the workforce or the hazards to which they are exposed.

The council will also ensure that contractors on the premises either have sufficient first aid provision, or if their work involves no special risks, the contractor may use council facilities, by agreement.

As a minimum, the need for first aid facilities compliance will be based on the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

First Aid Box

A first-aid box is kept in the village hall and the pavilion. It is checked regularly to ensure that its contents are legally compliant and adequate to fulfil the needs recognised by risk assessments

Housekeeping

All employees have a responsibility to ensure their own work area and the workplace is kept free from hazards, particularly those which may give rise to fire or to slips, trips and falls. Carpeting and floor coverings will be selected for their appropriateness to area usage and will be maintained in a condition suitable to prevent the risk of slips, trips and falls.

Stacking should be avoided but where this is not possible, materials should be stacked in a stable manner so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, so that the risk of them falling is reduced to a minimum.

Any spillage or leakage of liquids or solids which may give rise to a slip hazard must be cleaned up immediately.

The Council will promote good housekeeping through a system of regular workplace inspection.

Waste or surplus materials should be placed in a waste bin or returned to their source and not left lying around to cause a hazard.

Home Working

Most of the Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act apply to home workers as well as to employees working at an employer's workplace.

The council highlights particular regard to the provisions of:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Lone Working

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone but the broad duties imposed by the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations still apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

The Council will avoid putting lone workers at any greater risk by introducing control measures which take account normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Control measures may include:

- a 'buddy system' by which regular contact is maintained between the lone worker and a nominated person who is advised of the action to take in the event of failed or lost contact.
- a manually operated device designed to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency.
- checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.
- A separate Lone Working Policy will be adopted by the council in addition to the Health and Safety Policy.

Manual Handling

Manual handling can be defined as the transporting or supporting of a load including:

- lifting and lowering.
- putting and taking.
- pushing and pulling.
- twisting, turning and stretching.
- carrying or moving by hand or bodily force.

Injuries are likely to be caused through incorrect lifting techniques or by not taking account of the weight, size, shape of the load, or the environment.

An assessment will be undertaken for all manual handling operations identifying any risk from handling of loads (other than those which are clearly not significant).

Employees are reminded that manual handling should be avoided where reasonably practicable and employees must not engage in manual handling activities that are beyond their capabilities, due to the size, weight or nature of the item to be moved.

The result of risk assessments will be communicated to employees and where appropriate, suitable training will be given to staff in correct lifting techniques.

Manual handling operation assessments will be carried out by the Parish Clerk or such other competent person appointed by the Council.

Hierarchy of measures for the manual handling process:

- avoid or eliminate the hazardous manual handling task.
- if it is unavoidable, assess the manual handling task for risk.
- introduce measures to reduce the risk of injury from the task to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

Monitoring and Review

To ensure that the various procedures and policies set out in the arrangements section of the Health and Safety Policy are being adhered to and being implemented as intended, an annual audit will be undertaken. These audits will be conducted by the Parish Clerk and other relevant personnel, aided by external health and safety professional(s) where their assistance is considered appropriate.

The findings of the audits will be communicated to the council with a review of the effectiveness of the arrangements contained in this section of the policy.

In addition, the Health and Safety Policy together with all risk assessments will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain valid, and they will be updated to reflect any necessary changes.

The council's risk management policy details the need for an appropriate level of insurance to mitigate against any claim against the council due to health and safety implications as detailed in this policy.

Risk Assessments

The management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that suitable assessments of significant hazards in the workplace are undertaken that could affect staff or others, arising from council activities. Certain work activities require separate, specific assessments.

Risk assessments will be conducted in all areas but with reference to the following Regulations:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – General risk assessments.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – fire prevention, detection, alarm systems, evacuation procedures.
- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 – PPE assessments.
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 – DSE assessments.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – Manual handling assessments.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 – COSHH assessments.
- The findings of the assessments will be available to all staff. Information, instruction and training will be given to employees following an assessment where appropriate.
- Assessments will be reviewed annually or upon any significant change in circumstances or following an accident/incident.

Smoking at Work

Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the Council's premises. All employees who are working away from Council premises are reminded that they must observe the smoking restrictions which apply at remote sites and, to observe the requirements of the Smoke-free (Premises & Enforcement) Regulations 2006.

Stress

Stress is defined as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge.

If stress is not identified and addressed, it can lead to both physical and mental health problems. The effect of stress on performance is well established and in the interests of both the health of employees and the efficiency of the Council, it should be minimised. Symptoms of stress include, headaches, depression, raised blood pressure, insomnia, irritability, nervous break-down, psoriasis, eczema, hair loss, panic attacks, palpitations and loss of appetite. If employees believe that they have a problem with stress, they are encouraged to seek confidential assistance from their line manager.

Volunteer Workers

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 make specific provision for the health and safety of volunteers. Managers will ensure that all voluntary workers are given health and safety induction training covering identified hazards, together with the emergency procedures and the management controls appropriate to those risks before they commence their duties. Volunteer workers may be exposed to the complete range of risks to which other employees are exposed and they will also be unfamiliar with many of the procedures requiring extra supervision. Volunteers will be provided the council's health and safety policy referring them to aspects of the policy that apply to them. Protective clothing and equipment will also be provided where there is a need and when a volunteer is carrying out work on behalf of the council that is not on office premises they must notify either the Parish Clerk or in the absence of the Parish Clerk, the Chair of the Council. The volunteer must give times when they are carrying out council duties and if lone working must adhere to all points in this policy and sign to record that they have read, understood and complied with its content.

Training

The council has a responsibility under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide training for employees to ensure their health and safety at work. The policy of the council is to ensure that employees and volunteers are adequately trained in the council's health and safety policies and procedures as well as being trained to undertake any task they are expected to carry out and for any emergency that may arise during their employment. All new employees are given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy and must sign an acceptance note to state they have read and understood the document and will implement its rules and procedures. On successful completion of any training the employee will be required to complete a form indicating that he/she has received and understood the training. This form will be countersigned by the employee's immediate line manager. All employees and volunteers have a legal responsibility to cooperate with the Council's training programme so that its objectives can be met. Employees are expected to attend training courses and must put into practice any new instruction or guideline provided. Employees must also follow any revised working procedures once they have been given the appropriate information, instruction and training.

Duties and Responsibilities of all Visitors

Honeybourne Parish Council owes a duty of care to visitors to the Parish Council controlled areas of the village. The Council will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that safe access and egress is available and that areas are maintained in a safe condition.

Health and Safety at Parish Council Meetings and other events

- a) Meetings usually take place at Honeybourne Village Hall. Prior to each meeting a safety check should be carried out, in particular to check for slip or trip hazards and that fire exits are not blocked.
- b) Meetings at other venues will be risk assessed in advance
- c) A fully charged mobile phone with a good signal should be available at all meetings to call the emergency services if someone becomes ill, in case of a fire or other emergency.
- d) A risk assessment will be carried out in advance of any other event organized by the Parish

Council.

Parish Council Owned Street Furniture & Play equipment

- a) The Parish Council owned street furniture and play equipment is inspected weekly by the handyman.
- b) Members of the public can report any fault by emailing the Parish Clerk.
- c) The Council will take urgent action to address any safety issues relating to street furniture and play equipment they own.

Travelling on Parish Council Business

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 apply to all employees who visit other premises in the course of their work.

Employees who are working at remote premises must conform to all arrangements made by the duty holder of the premises regarding compliance with regulations covering health and safety, the environment, fire, security and liaison, such as signing the visitors' book, observing no smoking areas and reporting to named managers before starting or leaving work or moving to a different area.

If driving:

- The Health and Safety guidance on driving at work can be accessed at :
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.htm>
and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/practical.htm>
- Ensure that you are sufficiently fit and healthy to drive
- Ensure that your vehicle is maintained in a safe condition and fit for the road
- Take sufficient account of adverse weather conditions

Work Equipment

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 apply to the functioning and safety of council work equipment.

In order to minimise the risk of injury from work equipment arrangements will be placed for the assessment of risks with the creation of control measures to minimise the risks identified. These measures will include the following arrangements and procedures:

- an assessment of all new or second-hand equipment purchased.
- all equipment purchased will comply with any relevant product safety standards.
- all hired or rented equipment will be required to comply with the regulations, and will include the provision of comprehensible information on its safe use.
- inspection of the equipment (including statutory inspection if applicable) and testing where necessary.
- provision of suitable and effective safety devices and controls.
- provision of suitable and readily comprehensible signs and warnings.
- provision of suitable general, task and emergency lighting.
- ensuring that machinery and equipment is maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.
- ensuring that the suitability of equipment is matched to the tasks involved.
- ensuring that adequate and effective training, information and instruction is provided for operators.
- ensuring that maintenance is carried out safely by competent maintenance contractors.
- ensuring that only trained operators use the machinery.
- maintenance of a reporting system for any difficulties, hazards or defects encountered or identified with work equipment.

These arrangements will be reviewed annually and on any significant change in the type, nature or use of equipment.

Review Date	
Status	
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Homeworking Policy

1. Introduction

The Council recognises the advantages of home-based working although it does not suit everyone, and some job roles may not be appropriate to undertake at home.

This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that will apply if an employee works from home.

2. Scope of this policy

The policy is applicable to all staff who are home-based whether full time, part time or fixed term.

3. Safe working environment

Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, in so far as is reasonably practicable. Any working environment should be safe with employees adhering to all health and safety and work-related policies.

All home working employees are required to complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment' retained by the Parish Clerk and Chair of Staffing Committee. This checklist identifies any possible hazards in your home working environment and following completion measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified.

This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to arrangements such as new equipment, changes to the home-office space or house move.

Some of the most important considerations include: -

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work without distractions,
- The home office should have adequate space for you to work comfortably and safely,
- The desk should be large enough to accommodate equipment and paperwork,
- Preferably the home working space should have sufficient storage and be well organised, with equipment close to hand,
- The work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible,
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
- Regular visual checks on cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you should be carried out reporting defects accordingly.

4. Facilities and equipment

The council may provide equipment to enable working from home and will maintain and replace items when necessary.

It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided and any faults/defects should be reported to the Council as soon as possible. Should the risk assessment identify the need for further equipment this should also be reported to the council. All equipment provided belongs to the Honeybourne Parish Council, and upon termination of employment it will be expected to be promptly returned. Items are recorded on the Asset Register

5. Hours of work

A contract of employment will specify the hours of work with the expectation that an employee is contactable by telephone or email. There may be times during the working day when an employee is not available in which case these should be flagged to the Clerk (or the Chair of the Council) with prior authorisation, this does not include comfort breaks.

All employees by law are permitted to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:

- A break of at least 20 minutes during each working day over 6 hours,
- A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
- At least one complete day each week when no work is done.

6. Potential conflicts of interest

During hours of work, the council expects that a work environment enables effective working and that there is minimal distraction of domestic matters.

In the case of emergency requiring attendance relating to a non-work matter, notification of such should be forwarded to the Clerk or Chairman.

7. Data protection

Employees are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated material secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to ensure:

- that filing cabinets and drawers are locked when they are not being used,
- that all documentation belonging to the Parish Council is safely secured except when in use.
- that passwords are set up on all IT equipment and applications,
- that documents are saved to cloud based software.
- that sensitive telephone conversations take place in privacy.

8. Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

Honeybourne Parish Council's Employers' Liability Insurance extends to home-based staff and covers council equipment in the home working environment.

Employees may also be required to seek permission from its landlord or mortgage lender to allow for a working from home arrangement.

Employees are also required to report their home working status to their own insurance provider to ensure no infringement invalidates the domestic policy.

Date: _____

Assessor: _____

Location of Assessment: _____

Risk	Yes / No	Action Required
Desk Area		
Do you have adequate space to work comfortably?		
Is there enough space underneath your desk to stretch your legs?		
Are there trailing electrical cables around your working area that need to be tied up?		
Is your working area warm, well-lit and well-ventilated?		
Do you need to a desk lamp to improve lighting?		
Is your working area clutter free so that you can focus easily on the task?		
Display Screen Set-Up		
Is your desk chair set up correctly? Is your lower back supported, are there armrests and are your feet flat on the floor?		
Do you have enough surface space on your desk to work comfortably?		
Are your keyboard and mouse clean and within easy reach, without having to stretch?		
Is your display screen clean and positioned so there is no glare from a window or light?		
Is your display screen level with your eyes so it does not cause discomfort to your neck or head?		
Can you easily reach everything that you need without twisting and straining your upper body?		
Fire and Electrical Safety		
Are smoke detectors working and checked regularly e.g. every month?		
Do you regularly dispose of waste, including papers, to prevent a build-up of fire 'fuel'?		
Does any electrical equipment spark or show signs of burns and so needs removing from use?		
Do any wires look damaged or frayed and so need removing from use?		
Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to check for signs of wear and tear?		

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Lone Worker Policy

Introduction

There is often confusion/concern about the circumstances in which it is, or is not, safe to work alone. There is no general legal prohibition on working alone, but risk assessments should specifically consider whether the fact that a person is likely to undertake a task alone creates an unacceptable level of risk.

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees, but it is necessary to consider any particular additional hazards of lone working. The end result should be that lone workers are at no greater risk than other workers.

This document gives general guidance on working alone. It offers advice on how to comply with duties towards lone workers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999.

The Parish Council's Policy

The Council is responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees, visitors and contractors and safety of those affected by the work, e.g. members of the public.

These responsibilities cannot be transferred to people who work alone. It is the Council's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary.

Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with the Council in meeting its legal obligations.

Who Are Lone Workers?

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They are found in a wide range of situations, for example, where only one person works on the premises such as in an office or home workers.

Issues to be considered

The main issues to be considered in the risk assessment are:-

Is there risk of violence?

- Is the person medically (and psychologically) fit to work alone?
- Is any special training required?
- Are the individual(s) concerned and any necessary safe working practices adequately monitored?
- Are there adequate arrangements in the event of an emergency?
- Can all plant, substances and equipment involved in the work be safely handled and/or operated by one person?

Assessing the risks

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety of Work Regulations 1999 still apply. These require identifying the hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks. It is important to talk to employees and their safety representatives as they are a valuable source of information and advice. This will help to ensure that all relevant hazards have been identified and appropriate controls chosen. Consultation with employees and their representatives on health and safety matters is a legal duty anyway.

Controlling the risk

Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision, protective equipment, mobile phones, 'calling in systems', etc. Employers should take steps to check that control measures are used and review the risk assessment from time to time to ensure it is still adequate.

When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place.

Where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, that employer should inform the lone worker's employer of any risks and the control measures that should be taken. This helps the lone worker's employer to assess the risks.

Risk assessment should help decide the right level of supervision. There are some activities which are high risk

Safe Working Arrangements

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. Employers need to be aware of the law and standards which apply to their work activities, and may need to seek expert advice, then assess whether the requirements can be met by people working alone.

Lone workers face particular problems. Some of the issues which need special attention when planning safe working arrangements are as follows:

- Can the risk of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk- control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, for example fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions.

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?

Are women especially at risk if they work alone?

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary.

Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

- What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions fully.

Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances which may be new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training.

Monitoring

Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to see they remain safe. These may include:

- Regular contact between the lone worker and supervision using a mobile phone or landline phone.
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.

Emergencies

What happens if a person becomes ill or has an accident, or there is an emergency?

- Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies.
- Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events.
- Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them. Information about emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers who visit premises.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

Control measures

Consider the following practical guidelines:

1. Lone workers, outside normal working hours and in isolated buildings, should telephone a designated person and advise place of work and expected duration of stay as they leave the building and by writing time span and location on the white board in the office.
2. Ensure a working telephone is available.
3. Lone workers should not undertake dangerous work, for example using dangerous chemicals or operating dangerous machinery.
4. When undertaking off site visits, the checklist below must be considered prior to the visit.

Off site visit checklist for lone workers	YES	NO
Is there a risk of violence?		
Is there safe access and exit for one person?		
Is manual handling undertaken?		
Is the employee medically fit to carry out the lone working tasks?		
Is there first aid provision?		
Can an emergency service approach close enough if necessary?		
Is there a clear understanding on how long the work will take?		
Are transport arrangements to and from the workplace adequate?		
Is there a system for maintaining contact with the lone worker?		
Is there CCTV on the site being visited?		
Is the Clerk trained to deal with violence and aggression?		
Does the Clerk know how to diffuse potentially violent situations?		
Is the Clerk briefed about the areas they visit?		
Does the Clerk have all available information on those being visited?		
Has an itinerary been left?		

Have plans been made to keep in contact with Councillors?		
Has the Clerk the means to contact their Chairman?		
Does the Clerk know how to complete an incident form?		

DRAFT

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Press and Media Policy

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within the Council for working with the media and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, it provides guidance on how to deal with issues that may arise when dealing with the media.

KEYS AIMS

The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media – press, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Council and to explain the reasons for particular policies and priorities.

It is important that the press have access to the Clerk/ Members and to background information to assist them in giving accurate information to the public. To balance this, the Council will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the governments Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

The Parish Council's adopted Standing Orders should be adhered to.

CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

The Clerk and Members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.

Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action taken.

When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.

There are a number of personal privacy issues for the Clerk and Members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details are in the public domain); disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Clerk before any response is made to the media.

When responding to approaches from the media, concerning Parish Council Business, only the Clerk and Chairman (or vice chairman on behalf of the chairman) are authorised to make contact with the media.

Statements made by the Chairman and the Clerk should reflect the Council's opinion.

Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk. The clerk can only respond after discussing his/her response with the chairman or in the absence of the Chair the Vice- Chair.

ATTENDANCE OF MEDIA AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Local Government Act 1972 requires that agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request.

The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating and workspace will be made available. They can record/film meetings but cannot do a running commentary.

PRESS RELEASES

The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.

The Clerk or any Member may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Clerk and approved by the Chairman in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.

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Honeybourne Parish Council Facebook Policy

1. Introduction

Social media provides the Council with the opportunity to communicate to a wide audience instantaneously on a range of subjects relating to its activities, providing updates, news information including relevant information from other sources.

2. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Honeybourne Parish Council intends to use the social media platform Facebook to supplement existing methods of how it communicates with the local community.

3. Definition of Social Media

Social media is a term for websites based on user participation and user-generated content. They include social networking sites and other sites that are centred on user interaction.

Social media has the following characteristics:

- Covers a wide variety of formats, including text, video, photographs, audio;
- Allows messages to flow between many different types of devices; PC, phones and tablets;
- Involves different levels of engagement by participants who can create, comment or just view information;
- Speed and broaden the flow of information;
- Allows communications to take place in real time or intermittently.

4. Aims and Objectives

Social media can be used by the Council as an effective and measurable way to achieve resident engagement and attract publicity.

The aim of this Policy is to ensure:

- Engagement with individual and communities and successful promotion of Council based services and activities through the use of Facebook;
- That communication by use of Facebook is effective, timely appropriate, useful, engages with a wider audience and utilises cross-promotion of the Council's websites which is the principal platform for communicating and publishing information about the Council activities.
- A consistent approach is adopted and maintained in its use;
- That the Council information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of its Facebook Account;
- That only authorised users operates within existing Policies, guidelines and relevant Legislation;
- That the Council's reputation is upheld and improved rather than adversely affected;

5. Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk is the designated "Council" owner of the Council's Facebook Account. No account details may be changed without the permission of the Clerk or Chair or Vice Chair of the Council. Only information regarding the Parish Council or deemed relevant to the Parish of Honeybourne by the Parish Clerk or Chair or Vice-Chair will be uploaded and it is intended that all posts will be for information only and will not have the option to be commented on.

The Parish Clerk or in the Clerk's absence the Chair or Vice- Chair are the only authorised persons to operate the account in accordance with the following good practice guidelines for Parish Councils' use of social media:

- Post what you want the world to see. It is not like posting something on your website or blog and then realising that a story or photo should be taken down. On social media networking sites, once you post something it may continue to be available, even after it is removed from the site;
- Do not disclose confidential matters or criticise Council Policies, personnel or contractors;
- Do not post images that include young people without parental permission;
- Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libellous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted material, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations;
- To reduce security risks, do not install any external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programs and games;
- Maintain updated anti-virus and malware protection to avoid infection of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer;
- Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall, providing a link for you to click; leading to fake login pages;
- If you find information on the social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines then you must report it as required by law.

6. Monitoring and Reviewing of this Policy

The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. Any proposed amendments to this policy following review must be approved by full Council.

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Honeybourne Parish Council Social Media Policy

1.	What is Social Media
1.1	'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.
1.2	This interaction may be through computers, mobile phones and tablet technology, but may extend in the future. Examples of social media websites include: Social networking – (e.g. Facebook) Professional networking (e.g. LinkedIn) Video sharing – (eg. YouTube) Blogs (eg. Wordpress) Micro- blogging (eg. Twitter) etc.
2.	Policy Statement
2.1	This policy is intended to help employees including both full and part-time, fixed-term and casual employees (collectively referred to as employees in this policy), volunteers and Members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, social networking websites, forums, message boards, comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.
2.2	This policy outlines the standards we require employees, volunteers and Members to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which we will monitor your use of social media and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.
3.	The scope of the policy
3.1	All employees, volunteers and Members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
3.2	Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct.
4.	Responsibility for implementation of the policy
4.1	The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
4.2	The Parish Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimize risks to the Council's work.
4.3	All employees, volunteers and Members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council.
5.	Using social media sites in the Council's name
5.1	Only the Parish Clerk, or in the Clerk's absence the Chair or Vice-Chair are permitted to post material on a social media website in the Council's name and on the Council's behalf.
5.2	Members are not permitted to engage in social media activity in the name of the Council. Any Member engagement on social media should be explicit in that comments are those of the individual Councillor, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Council, any Committee of the Council, any other Councillor or any officer of the Council.
6.	Using social media
6.1	As a Council we recognise the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about our Council and community. We also recognise the importance of our employees, volunteers and Members joining in and helping shape local government conversation and direction through interaction in social media.
6.2	Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the Council you must have read and understood this policy. Employees, volunteers and Members must have sought and gained prior approval to do so from the Parish Clerk or in the Clerk's absence the

	Chair or Vice-Chair.
7.	Rules for use of social media
7.1	<p>Guidance for Council employees on the use of Council Social Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers should be familiar with the terms of use of third party websites – e.g. Facebook – and adhere to these at all times; • No information should be published that is not already known to be in the public domain – i.e. available on the Council’s website, contained in minutes of meetings, stated in Council published policies and procedures, or approved by the Parish Clerk (or employee under delegation) • Information that is published should be factual, fair thorough and transparent. • Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal private or confidential information. • Everyone must be mindful that information published in this way may stay in the public domain indefinitely, without the opportunity for retrieval/deletion. • Copyright laws must be respected. • Conversation or report that are meant to be private or internal must not be published without permission. • Other organisations should not be reference without their approval- when referencing, link back to the original source wherever possible. • Do not publish anything that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable. • Employees must remember that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Council and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.
7.2	All staff and volunteers
7.2.1	Staff and volunteers must not use Social Media accounts in relation to the Council’s business.
7.2.2	Any employee or volunteer who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto social media website should inform the Clerk or the Chair of the Council.
7.3	Third party Social Media and Individual Councillor Usage
7.3.1	Councillors need to think about whether they are acting in a private capacity, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of Honeybourne Parish Council.
7.3.2	Comments of a derogatory, proprietary or libellous nature should not be made and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and colourful language.
7.3.3	Councillors must be aware that any use of social media in which reference is made to the role as a Councillor, or to the Council business (however tenuous) may be deemed to make the whole account and every comment in it a “ Council” account and therefore the standards of the Code of Conduct will be applied.
7.3.4	<p>The seven Nolan Principles applicable to holding public office- selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.</p> <p>Do ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set appropriate privacy settings for any networking site • Watch out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on any blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid any perception that you condone such views. • Be aware that the higher your profile as a Councillor, the more likely it is that you may be seen as acting in an official capacity when you blog or network. • Ensure any Council facilities are used appropriate – if using a Council – provided site or social networking area, any posts that you make are extremely likely to be viewed as being made in your official capacity. • Remember that you are personally responsible for the content you publish on any form of social media. • Never give out personal details of others such as home address and telephone numbers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you handle any personal or sensitive information in line with the Data Protection legislation. • When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for the Council. Avoid use of the Council email address, logos or other Council identification, and do not post or comment on items or relevance to the Council. • Show respect to all. You should be respectful of the authority and employees. Derogatory comments are always wrong. • Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perception of the Council.
7.3.5	Know your obligations: you must comply with other Council policies when using social media. For example, you should be careful not to breach Council confidentiality policies.
7.3.6	Where Councillors choose to use personal accounts for the Council's business, you must make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only. Where possible a standard disclaimer should be used such as: “Statements and opinions here are my own and don't necessarily represent the Council's policies or opinions” .
7.3.7	Avoid publishing any information that you could only have accessed in your position as a Councillor.
7.3.8	Be careful if making 'political' points, and avoid being specific or personal about individuals including other Councillors. Don't ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment in haste • Post comments that you would not be prepared to make in writing or in face-to-face contact. • Use Council facilities for personal or political purposes. • Never: Post comments that are in breach of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy or that incites violence or hatred or are obscene or discriminatory.
8.	Monitoring use of Social Media websites
8.1	Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for Council purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken against employees under the Disciplinary Procedure.
8.2	Misuse of social media websites can in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the Council.
8.3	In particular a serious case of uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any to the inappropriate material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, may amount to gross misconduct.
8.4	Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
8.5	If you notice any use of social media by other employees, volunteers or Members in breach of this policy please report it to the Clerk or the Chair of the Parish Council.
9.	Monitoring and review of this policy
9.1	The Parish Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice