

Zero Tolerance Policy

1. Opening Statement

The staff and members of Honeybourne Parish Council treat everyone with courtesy and respect and ask for the same in return. We ask that members of the public treat the Councillors and Council Staff courteously without violence, abuse or harassment.

Councillors and Council Staff have the right to carry out their civic duties and work without fear of being attacked or abused. Any behaviour, whether that be verbal, physical or in writing, which causes either Councillors or Council Staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened, is totally unacceptable.

The Zero Tolerance Policy covers abuse, aggression or threats made in person, over the telephone or in written communication, including social media.

2. Statement of Intent

2.1 Honeybourne Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer, committing to treating employees and councillors in a fair and equitable manner, with dignity and respect, within a working environment free from all forms of bullying, harassment and aggression.

2.2 The Council acknowledges that in the day-to-day delivery of services, the Clerk and councillors can be confronted by aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour by members of the public. Whilst acknowledging that such incidents may arise, the Council affirms that such behaviour is wholly unacceptable. Specifically, the Council is not prepared to tolerate:

- Verbal abuse of or threats to its Clerk/Councillors or employees either during or out of working hours arising from their involvement with the Council.
- Verbal or physical harassment to its Clerk/Councillors or employees either during or out of working hours arising from their involvement with the Council.
- Physical, racial or sexual assault upon employees by members of the public, either during or out of working hours, arising from their employment or involvement with the Council.
- Attacks on or damage to the property of Clerk/Councillors arising from or in conjunction with the Clerk/Councillors carrying out their duties.
- Violent or threatening behaviour towards the Clerk/Councillors in the workplace arising from matters extraneous to service delivery.

3. Legal References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994;
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

4. Threatening Behaviour

4.1 The Council considers threatening behaviour to be:

- Attempted or actual aggressive, threatening or physical actions made towards any Councillor or member of staff;

- The use of aggressive, threatening or abusive language (including raising of voice, swearing, shouting or in writing) which threatens or intimidates Councillors or Council Staff.
- 4.2 This policy applies throughout all Council Meetings, but it also applies to any Councillor or Council Staff away from Council Meetings, but only in so far as it relates to the business of the Parish Council.
- 4.3 Any instance or threat of abuse or aggression, whether made in person, over the telephone or in written communication, including on social media, will be reported to the Police and recorded in an incident log.
- 4.4 The Council reserves the right to remove any offender from Council meetings and cease face to face or telephone contact with them with immediate effect. In this situation, the individual will be notified either verbally or in writing that their conduct is not acceptable and that the details of the incident have been logged and passed to the Police. They will be informed that only acceptable written correspondence, either by post or email, will be permitted in future from them.