



STAFF HANDBOOK

Adopted on 10th November 2021

Reviewed 2nd November 2023

Reviewed 9th October 2024

**Reviewed by Staffing Committee 23rd October
and adopted by Council 18th November 2025**

1. Introduction

Odiham Parish Council (OPC) takes its role as an employer seriously and understands the importance of setting out clear policies and guidelines which apply to all staff. This Staff Handbook will be issued to staff when commencing employment, in addition to a personal "Statement of Particulars" (contract) and is intended to provide a useful reference document on policies and procedures which apply to all staff.

This Staff Handbook was prepared by the Staffing Committee and adopted by OPC on 10th November 2021 and reviewed annually.

2. Statement of Particulars (Contract)

All permanent appointments will be issued with a Statement of Particulars within one month of starting employment. This will, as a minimum, include:

1. Period of employment
2. Job title
3. Normal place of work
4. Reporting arrangements
5. Remuneration
6. Pay reviews
7. Hours of works
8. Termination of employment
9. Annual leave (with pay)
10. Sickness absence and sick pay
11. Pensions (where applicable)
12. Collective agreements
13. Health & safety
14. Disciplinary and dismissal procedure
15. Grievance procedure
16. Changes of terms of employment
17. Inventions and intellectual property
18. Computer equipment
19. Data protection
20. Deductions from salary
21. Declaration of entitlement to work in UK

3. Other staff related policies adopted by OPC which form part of your terms & conditions

- I. Sickness Absence Policy (Appendix 1 and available online at [chrome-https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Sickness-absence-policy-November-2025.pdf](https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Sickness-absence-policy-November-2025.pdf))
- II. Flexible Working Policy (Appendix 2 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Flexible-Working-Policy-November-2025.pdf>)
- III. Emergency Dependants Leave Policy (Appendix 3 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Emergency-Dependants-Leave-Policy-November-2025.pdf>)
- IV. Pensions Retention Policy (Appendix 4 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Pensions-Discretions-Policy-November-2025.pdf>)

4. Health & Safety

The health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers is considered as the highest priority by OPC and this commitment is evidenced by the Health & Safety Policy Statement which

is regularly reviewed and published online at the start of the Health & Safety Policy (Appendix 5 - <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Health-and-Safety-Policy-December-2024.pdf>) This applies to staff, councillors and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers must take responsibility for their own health and safety and not place themselves in any dangerous situations or take any action which may cause injury or harm. It is essential for all staff to familiarise themselves with the Health & Safety Policy and acknowledge in writing they have read and understood it.

5. Lone Working Policy

There is also a separate Lone Working Policy (Appendix 6 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Lone-Working-Policy-November-2025.pdf>) Due to the nature of the job, it is inevitable there will be times when you are lone working, either in the Parish Office or out at OPC owned sites. Please take time to risk assess each situation and talk through each scenario with your manager before acting.

6. Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures in the office will be explained to you as close as possible to the first day of your employment.

The Health & Safety Policy and individual Statement of Particulars both include information on what to do if an emergency situation arises. But we cannot guarantee they include details of every emergency situation. All staff and volunteers are expected to respond to further instruction and respond reasonably should an unforeseen emergency situation arise. This may include a verbal instruction.

7. Safeguarding

As a local council working in the heart of the community, you will come into contact with a range of different people living and working in the community. There is a Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 7 - <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Safeguarding-Policy-December-2023.pdf>) setting out what you should do if you identify a concern and the process OPC will follow in reporting these concerns to the relevant responsible authority.

8. Training and Development

Training and development is encouraged for everyone and supported by OPC where possible. Please refer to the Training and Development Policy (Appendix 8 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Training-and-Development-Policy-November-2025.pdf>) for further information.

9. Privacy and General Data Protection Policy

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 applies to OPC. There are various policies which cover the way in which OPC handles Council documentation and personal data.

All new staff are required to complete a consent form to hold and process personal data in connection with their employment (Appendix 9 - <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Consent-form-July-2023.pdf>).

The Privacy Notice (Appendix 10 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Privacy-notice-Staff->

[Cllrs-and-role-holders-July-2023.pdf](https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Cllrs-and-role-holders-July-2023.pdf)) provides further information on how OPC will store and process your personal data.

The full data Protection Policy can be read online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Data-Protection-Policy-July-2023.pdf>

GDPR provides the legal right to request details of your personal data OPC holds. There is a subject access request policy (Appendix 11 also available at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Subject-Access-Request-Policy-July-2023.pdf>) for this purpose.

10. General

As a Parish Council, OPC must act in accordance with certain legislation, guidance and Council rules (policies). All policies are published at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council/policies-and-publications>

Whilst we do not expect every role to have an in depth knowledge, the following rules determine the way in which OPC operates and every member of staff should be aware they exist and refer to them before taking action:

Standing Orders <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Standing-orders-revised-January-2025.pdf>

Financial Regulations <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Financial-Regulations-November-2024.pdf>

Internal controls <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Internal-Controls-November-2025.pdf>

11. If things go wrong

Odiham Parish Council will do everything possible to avoid disputes and respond to issues raised in a reasonable and timely manner. Should you feel your line manager or Council has not listened to your immediate concerns, you should follow:

- a. The process set out in the Disciplinary Procedure (Appendix 12 and available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Disciplinary-Policy-Procedure-November-2025.pdf>

And/or

- b. The Grievance Procedures (Included as Appendix 13 and also available online at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Grievance-policy-procedure-November-2025.pdf>).



ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

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What to do if you are unwell

If you are away from work because of sickness you must:

- Telephone [your manager / the Clerk], before your contractual (or normal start time for work) on the first day of absence providing details and how long you expect to be off. If you are unable to call personally, someone else may call for you. It is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified. You must then telephone again each day (unless otherwise agreed with the Clerk).
- If you are away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), you must complete a self-certification form and provide it to the council when you are back at work.
- If you are away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), you must send in a 'fit to work' statement from your doctor and continue to do so as each new certificate is issued to you. This certificate gives details as to whether you are too ill to work or whether you are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council. This gives you and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support your return to work. The form also gives more space for the doctor to provide information about your condition and helpful tick boxes to suggest common ways to help you return to work.
- All sickness or injury absence will be entered on your employment record and will be monitored from time-to-time.

Return-to-work meetings

On the first day back at work after a period of sickness absence your manager may want to meet informally. If this is not possible on your first day back, the meeting may take place later. The return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions should be private and confidential. The meeting would normally include

- a welcome back to work;
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting; which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate;
- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way and to understand whether the council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance;
- explain that the absence will be recorded;
- establish if medical advice has been sought (if appropriate);
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a fit note from the doctor has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps; and



- a handover of work where appropriate.

Medical appointments

The council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the council. The council will allow reasonable time off work (without pay) for such appointments.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are ill and unable to attend work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). SSP is currently paid after 4 Qualifying Days absence from work. The Qualifying Days are your normal working days that are in your contract. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted from SSP and if you earn below the lower earnings limit, you will not qualify for SSP.

Medical advice

The Council may want to obtain advice on your fitness for work from occupational health advisers or medical practitioners. Examples of when the Council might refer to occupational health or a medical practitioner include the following:

- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury;
- to establish when you might be able to return to work;
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties;
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguous as to the exact nature of the condition;
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work;
- to understand the likely recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work; and
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability, if you are disabled.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you.



If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Persistent short-term absence

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness. We understand most employees will have some short-term sickness absence from time to time. However, if you are frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on your colleagues and councillors.

Therefore, it is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently and in some circumstances, the Council may begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process. If we do so, we will meet with you to set attendance targets. Following a review meeting we may issue a formal warning if those targets are not met. You will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting and you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. You may appeal against a formal warning. If your absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the council may bring your employment to an end following consultation with you.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition then we will also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician or your G.P. or consultant to establish further information about your health and how the council can support your attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the council will not consider any pregnancy related absence. The council will also make adjustments where absences are related to a disability by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The council will consider any alternative employment options before making any decision about ending employment. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal sanction. The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Long-term absence

OPC contracts do not allow for long term sick leave over 4 weeks.



Absence as a result of disability

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010 (formerly as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

Data protection

The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data will be provided in our employee privacy notice. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

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



ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

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What is flexible working

Every staff member has a contract of employment that sets out the working hours. A request to work flexibly is a request from the employee to change either the number of working hours, when or where they are worked. Flexible working does not mean a member of staff can work the hours they wish from day-to-day, week-to-week.

Flexible working arrangements take account of employees' preferences, interests and non-work responsibilities whilst also meeting the needs of the council. Common examples of flexible working include part-time working; zero-hours / casual working; variable hours; flexitime; job-sharing; term-time working; compressed hours; career breaks; and sabbaticals.

Flexible working can result in benefits to councils, in that such arrangements can help make the most of today's diverse workforce and improve the council's ability to recruit and retain staff. It is good practice to make flexible working open to all staff.

This policy has been written to explain the process which we will use to respond to requests by staff to vary hours, pattern or place of work.

Scope

You have a statutory right to request a change to your contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly provided you have been continuously employed with us for at least 26 weeks at the date the application is made, regardless of whether you work full or part-time or have a temporary contract of employment. It does not apply to agency staff.

Policy

Our policy is to comply with both the spirit and the letter of the law on the right to request flexible working. To this end its aim is to inform all staff of their right to request flexible working and to ensure those rights are understood and that staff feel confident any decisions regarding their requests will be handled objectively, fairly, free from discrimination, and that staff will not be treated detrimentally because they have asked for flexible working arrangements.

Making the request

To apply for flexible working, please provide the following information in writing, and submit this to the Clerk. In the case of the Clerk, the request should be submitted to the Chair of the Council:

- The date of the application,
- A statement that this is a statutory request,
- Details of how you would like to work flexibly and when you want to start,



- An explanation of how you think flexible working might affect the council and how this could be dealt with, e.g. if you're not at work on certain days, and,
- A statement saying if and when you've made a previous application.

You can only make one statutory request in any 12-month period. You are asked to let us know if you are making the request because you consider the change could be a reasonable adjustment to support a disability. In such a case some of the requirements of this policy would not apply (i.e. the minimum period of service; one request per annum).

Responding to your request

Once we receive your written request, we will arrange a discussion with you as soon as possible, unless we agree immediately to your request. It may be that we need to ask you to supply further details before the meeting. If there is likely to be a delay in discussing your request, we will inform you. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague.

Having the right to request a change to your working arrangements does not necessarily mean that your request will be accepted. Your request will be fully discussed at the meeting. We will carefully consider your request looking at the benefits of the requested changes on working conditions for you as an employee and the council and weighing these against any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

Having considered the changes, you are requesting and weighing up the advantages, possible costs and potential logistical implications of granting the request, we will write to you with the decision. The decision will be either:

- To accept the request and establish a start date, with or without a trial period and review date. Where the request is granted, we will set out what changes will be made to your terms and conditions of employment, or,
- To propose an alternative, which may require further discussion, or,
- To confirm a compromise agreed at the discussion, or,
- To reject the request, setting out the reasons, how these apply to the application and the appeal process.

Requests to work flexibly will be considered objectively, however we may not always be able to grant a request to work flexibly if it cannot be accommodated. If we turn down your request, it will be because of one, or a combination of the following reasons, and we will explain why.

- The burden of additional costs is unacceptable to the council
- Detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver for the community
- Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff



- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes to the council

If you are only looking for an informal change for a short period to your working hours or conditions, for instance to pursue a short course of study, we may consider allowing you to revert back to your previous conditions after a specified period, e.g. three months, or after the occurrence of a specific event, such as the end of a course of study.

You must be aware that if your request is approved you do not have a statutory right to make a further request for a period of 12 months, although you may still ask without the statutory right.

Timeframe for dealing with requests

We will do what we can to respond to your request as soon as possible although the law requires the consideration process to be complete within three months of first receiving a request, including any appeal. If the request cannot be dealt with within three months, we may ask to extend the consideration process, provided you agree to the extension.

Handling requests in a fair way

We may receive more than one request to work flexibly closely together from different employees and it may or may not be possible to accept all requests. If we agree to a request for flexible working arrangements this does not mean that we can also agree to a similar change for another employee. Each case will be considered on its merits looking at the business case in the order they have been received. We may need to take others' contractual terms into account and we may ask you if there is any room for adjustment or compromise before coming to a decision.

Appealing the decision

If we decline your request and you wish to appeal, you must do so, in writing, within 5 days of receiving the letter informing you of the outcome. We will then write to you to arrange a meeting to discuss your appeal. This meeting will be held as soon as reasonably possible and will normally be with a sub-committee of councillors. You may wish to be accompanied at that meeting by a work colleague.

There may be circumstances when the council is unable to meet within the required timeframes, in which case a meeting will be held as soon as is practically possible.



The effect on your contract of employment

Any change in your hours or pattern of work will normally be a permanent change to your contractual terms and conditions. This means that you will not automatically be able to revert back to the previous working pattern (unless otherwise agreed). So, for example, if your new flexible working pattern involves working reduced hours, you will not automatically be able to revert to working full time hours.

Changes to your working pattern may affect other terms and conditions of employment. For example, reducing your hours of work will mean that your pay and leave will be pro-rated accordingly. Your pension may also be affected.

Any changes to your terms and conditions as a result of a change to your working pattern will be confirmed in your decision letter, however if you have further queries about how a proposed change to your pattern of work might affect your terms and conditions please speak to the Clerk or Chair of the Council in the first instance.

Data protection

When managing a flexible working request, we will process personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible working. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

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



ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL EMERGENCY / DEPENDANTS LEAVE POLICY

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Purpose and scope

All employees with dependants can take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with unforeseen emergencies. This is unlikely to amount to more than a day or two a year.

This policy covers all instances where you may need to take unplanned absence to attend to urgent or serious situations affecting your dependants and where no alternative provision is available.

Emergency leave is designed to provide carers with the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for the care of dependants. The Emergency leave policy is not intended to be used to allow carers to look after dependants on an ongoing basis (although time off may be available under other policies).

Taking emergency leave

Dependents include parents, husband, wife, partner, civil partner, children or individuals living as part of the family for whom you are the main carer or an individual who depends on you for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

Emergency leave is only intended to cover unplanned absence to attend to urgent or serious situations affecting your immediate family or dependants. It is impossible to provide a complete list of circumstances that are covered under the policy; however, the most common circumstances are as follows: -

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured,
- as a result of the death of a dependant,
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant, or
- to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly when the child is at school

As soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, contact the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) by telephone to explain the circumstances, and if possible, an indication of the length of time-off you are likely to need in order to make alternative arrangements. If the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) is unavailable you must contact another councillor instead.

If you need to stay and care for a dependant on an ongoing basis you can agree with the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) to take annual leave; or where you have insufficient annual leave to take a period of unpaid leave. Alternatively, you may be able to take Parental Leave where the care is for your child.

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



Employer Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy

Employer name: **Odiham Parish Council**
Employer number: **K7020**
18th November 2025

Statement of policy

on the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (LGPS) 2013 and the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014.

This document sets out the scheme employer's policy on the operation of each of the mandatory discretions (and optional discretions where chosen) available under the LGPS Regulations. It states whether or not discretions will be operated and the circumstances and criteria for applying them.

The following discretions apply to members who were actively paying into the scheme as at 1 April 2014 onwards

PART A - Mandatory Discretions	
Power to award additional pension Regulation 31	
Whether, at the full cost to the Scheme employer, to grant extra annual pension of up to £7,579 (figure at 1 April 2023) to an active member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency [regulation 31 of the LGPS Regulations 2013]	
Employer Policy Decision	Odiham Parish Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the Staffing Committee where a clear financial or operational advantage can be gained in doing so.
Shared cost additional pension contributions Regulation 16(2e) (4d)	
Whether, how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a Shared Cost APC scheme	Whether, where an active member wishes to purchase extra annual pension of up to £7,579 (figure as at 1 April 2023), by making additional pension contributions (APCs), to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension via a shared cost additional pension contribution (SCAPC) [regulations 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) of the LGPS Regulations 2013].
	Note: This does not include instances where the employee is paying for lost pension via an APC where the election was made in the first 30 days (or longer if the employer allows) – in this circumstance the employer must pay two-thirds of the cost of such purchase
Employer Policy Decision	Odiham Parish Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances. It will not establish a SCAPC scheme for any employee unless there is a clear financial or operational advantage to be gained from doing so.

Whether to allow flexible retirement

(Regulation 30 (6)) & TP11(2) & R30(8)

Whether to allow flexible retirement for staff aged 55 or over who, with the agreement of the Scheme employer, reduce their working hours or grade [regulation 30(6) of the LGPS Regulations 2013] and, if so, as part of the agreement to allow flexible retirement:

- whether, in addition to the benefits the member has built up prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to allow the member to choose to draw:
 - I. all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014, and / or
 - II. all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2014 [regulations 11(2) and 11(3) of the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014], and
- whether to waive, in whole or in part, any actuarial reduction which would otherwise be applied to the benefits taken on flexible retirement before Normal Pension Age (NPA) [regulation 3(5) of the LGPS Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014, regulation 18(3) of the LGPS (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 and regulations 30(6) and 30(8) of the LGPS Regulations 2013].

Employer Policy Decision

i) Whether to allow flexible retirement

Odiham Parish Council will consider requests for flexible retirement on a case by case basis after considering all cost and operational implications. The decision will be the responsibility of the Staffing Committee.

Whether to allow the member to choose to take

- a. part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014, and / or

Odiham Parish Council will consider requests for flexible retirement on a case by case basis after considering all cost and operational implications. The decision will be the responsibility of the Staffing Committee.

- b. all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2014
Odiham Parish Council will consider requests for flexible retirement on a case by case basis after considering all cost and operational implications. The decision will be the responsibility of the Staffing Committee.

ii) Whether to waive, in whole or in part, any actuarial reductions which would otherwise be applied to the benefits taken on flexible retirement before Normal Pension Age

Odiham Parish Council will only waive the actuarial reduction on flexible retirement or other bases on a recommendation from the Staffing Committee. Costs are borne by the employer and these must be carefully considered.

Switching on the 85 year rule

[paragraph 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014]

Whether to “switch on” the 85 year rule for a member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Members are now able to voluntarily retire between ages 55 and 60. If they were a member of the LGPS on 30 September 2006 then some of their benefits could be protected from reductions

applied to early payment under the 85-year rule. This rule only applies automatically to members voluntarily retiring from age 60 but the employer has the discretion to “switch it on” for voluntary retirements between age 55 and 60.

This discretion does not apply to flexible retirement (see [Regulation 30\(6\)](#)) whereby the 85 year rule is always switched on.

Where the employer does not choose to “switch on” the rule, then

- a) if the member has already met the 85 year rule, the member’s benefits are to be reduced in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (with the benefits from any pre 1 April 2008 membership for members who will not be 60 or more on 31 March 2016, and benefits from any pre 1 April 2016 membership for members who will be 60 or more on 31 March 2016, which would not normally have been subject to an actuarial reduction nonetheless being subject to a reduction calculated by reference to the period between the date the benefits are drawn and age 60) [paragraphs 1(2) and 1(4) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014], or
- b) if the member has not already met the 85 year rule, the member’s benefits are to be reduced in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (with the reduction on that part of the member’s benefits subject to the 85 year rule being calculated by reference to the period between the date the benefits are drawn and age 60, or the date of attaining the 85 year rule, whichever is the later), and
- c) the Scheme employer can exercise a discretion to waive any actuarial reductions (including where an actuarial reduction may still be applied to a member’s benefits after ‘switching back on’ the 85 year rule in full) (at cost to the Scheme employer, via an employer strain charge).

Employer Policy Decision

Odiham Parish Council will only “switch on” the 85 year rule in exceptional circumstances on the recommendation of the Staffing Committee once costs have been fully assessed.

Waiving of actuarial reductions

Regulation 30(8), TP3(1), TPSch 2, para 2(1), B30(5) and B30A(5)

Whether to waive, in whole or in part, any actuarial reductions on benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age (other than on the grounds of flexible retirement).

Employers can agree to waive any actuarial reductions due in the case of employees retiring any time after age 55. For active members voluntarily retiring on or after age 55 and before Normal Pension Age (NPA), who elect under regulation 30(5) of the LGPS Regulations 2013 to immediately draw benefits, and for deferred members and suspended tier 3 ill-health pensioners who elect under regulation 30(5) of the LGPS Regulations 2013 to draw benefits (other than on ill health grounds) on or after age 55 and before NPA.

There are 4 member groups which you would be making the discretions policy on, the below covers in what circumstance reductions can be waived and to which benefits these would apply:

Group 1 - Members joined before 1 October 2006 and who reached 60 before 1 April 2016

- To waive on compassionate grounds, any actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up before 1 April 2016, and/or
- To waive, in whole or in part, on any grounds, actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up after 31 March 2016

Group 2 - Members joined before 1 October 2006 and who reach age 60 between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020 and also meet their critical retirement age before 1 April 2020 (date member meets the 85 year rule)

- To waive on compassionate grounds, any actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up before 1 April 2020, and/or
- To waive in whole or in part on any grounds, actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up after 31 March 2020

Group 3 - Members joined before 1 October 2006 and who reach age 60 after 31 March 2020 (or who would reach age 60 between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020 and don't meet their critical retirement age before 1 April 2020 (date member meets the 85 year rule)

- To waive on compassionate grounds, any actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up before 1 April 2014, and/or
- To waive, in whole or in part on any grounds, actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up after 31 March 2014

Group 4 - Members joined after 1 October 2006

- To waive on compassionate grounds, any actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up before 1 April 2014, and/or
- To waive, in whole or in part on any grounds, actuarial reductions applied to benefits built up after 31 March 2014

Employers should also note that the strain cost of any such retirements would need to be met by the employer and paid into the Pension Fund at the appropriate time.

Employer Policy Decision

Whether to waive any actuarial reductions for a member voluntarily drawing benefits before NPA (other than on the grounds of flexible retirement), as outlined above.

Odiham Parish Council will only waive the actuarial reduction on flexible retirement or other bases on a recommendation from the Staffing Committee. Costs are borne by the employer and these must be carefully considered.

The following discretions apply to members who left the scheme between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014

RECORDS SHOW THAT OPC ONLY JOINED THE SCHEME FROM 01.04.14.

<p>Whether to “switch on” the 85 year rule for a member with deferred benefits voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 [paragraph 1(1)(c) & 1(2) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014]</p>
<p>Whether to “switch on” the 85 year rule for a member with deferred benefits voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60. A member with a deferred benefit who left the scheme voluntarily between 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2014 and who has subsequently become a deferred pensioner may now claim their benefits from age 55 without their employer’s consent. However, these benefits will be reduced for early payment. Where a member has reached the 85 year rule at the point of retirement, an employer can consent to switching on the 85 year rule. Any ‘strain’ to the Fund will be payable immediately by the Scheme employer.</p>
<p>Employer Policy Decision</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>Whether to ‘switch on’ the 85 year rule upon the voluntary early payment of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension? [paragraph 1(1)(c) & 1(2) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014]</p>
<p>Whether to “switch on” the 85 year rule for a member with a suspended tier 3 ill-health pension voluntarily drawing benefits (on or after 14 May 2018) on or after age 55 and before age 60. Where a member has reached the 85 year rule at the point of retirement, an employer can consent to switching on the 85 year rule. Any ‘strain’ to the Fund will be payable immediately by the Scheme employer.</p>
<p>Employer Policy Decision</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>Whether to waive upon the voluntary early payment of deferred benefits any actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds? [regulation 30(5) of the LGPS (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014]</p>
<p>A member with a deferred benefit who left the scheme voluntarily between 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2014 may now claim their benefits from age 55 without their employer’s consent. However, these benefits will be reduced for early payment. An employer can consent to waiving any reductions, on compassionate grounds, that would normally be applied to deferred benefits which are paid before age 65.</p>
<p>Employer Policy Decision</p>
<p>N/A</p>

Whether to waive upon the voluntary early payment of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension, any actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds?

[regulation 30A(5) of the LGPS (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014]

A member with a suspended tier 3 ill health pension and who left the scheme between 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2014 may now claim for their pension to be brought back into payment from age 55 without their employer’s consent. However, these benefits will be reduced for early payment.

An employer can consent to waiving any reductions, on compassionate grounds, that would normally be applied to deferred benefits which are paid before age 65.

Employer Policy Decision

N/A

The following discretions apply to members who left the scheme between 1 April 1998 and before 1 April 2008

RECORDS SHOW THAT OPC ONLY JOINED THE SCHEME FROM 01.04.14.

Whether to ‘switch on’ the 85 year rule upon the voluntary early payment of deferred benefits

[paragraph 1 (1) (f) & 1 (2) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) regulations 2014]

Whether, as the 85 year rule does not automatically fully apply to members who would otherwise be subject to it and who choose to voluntarily draw their deferred benefits (on or after 14 May 2018) on or after age 55 and before age 60, to switch the 85 year rule back on in full for such members.

Deferred members who left the scheme after 1 April 1998 are now able to voluntarily retire between ages 55 and 60. If they were a member of the LGPS on 30 September 2006 then some of their benefits could be protected from reductions applied to early payment under the 85 year rule. This rule only applies automatically to members voluntarily retiring from age 60 but the ceding employer has the discretion to “switch it on” for voluntary retirements between age 55 and 60. Where the employer does not choose to “switch on” the rule, then benefits built up would be subject to reduction in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State regardless of whether a member meets the rule or not

If the employer does agree to “switch on” the 85 year rule, the employer will have to meet the cost of any strain on fund resulting from the payment of benefits before age 60 i.e. where the member has already met the 85 year rule or will meet it before age 60.

Employer Policy Decision

N/A

Whether to grant applications for the early payment of pension benefits on or after age 50 and before age 55

[regulation 31(2) of the LGPS Regulations 1997].

Whether to grant application for early payment of deferred benefits on or after age 50 and before age 55.

A member with a deferred benefit who left the scheme between 1 April 1998 – 31 March 2008 can claim their benefits from age 50 with their employer's consent.

However, these benefits may be reduced for early payment and/or be subject to an unauthorised payment charge under the Finance Act 2004

Employer Policy Decision

N/A

Whether, on compassionate grounds, to waive any actuarial reduction that would normally be applied to benefits

[regulation 31(5) of the LGPS Regulations 1997 and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014].

Whether to waive any actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds which would normally be applied to benefits which are paid before age 65.

Employers should note that the strain cost of any such retirements would need to be met by the employer and paid into the Pension Fund at the appropriate time.

Employer Policy Decision

N/A

The following discretions apply to members who ceased active membership before 1 April 1998

RECORDS SHOW THAT OPC ONLY JOINED THE SCHEME FROM 01.04.14.

Whether to grant applications for the early payment of deferred pension benefits on or after age 50 and before NRD on compassionate grounds

[regulation D11(2)(c) of the LGPS Regulations 1995].

Whether to grant early payment of a deferred benefit on compassionate grounds, on or after age 50 and before NRD.

If granted, these benefits may be reduced for early payment and/or be subject to an unauthorised payment charge under the Finance Act 2004

Employer Policy Decision

N/A

- These policies may be subject to review from time to time. Any subsequent change in this Policy Statement will be notified to affected employees.
- If the employer decides to amend the policy, no change can come into effect until one month has passed since the date the amended policy statement was published.

- Any changes to this policy will be notified to the Hampshire Pension Services within 1 month of the change.

For the full list of discretions policies go to <http://lgpslibrary.org/assets/gas/ew/DISCLv1.6c.pdf>

Signed on behalf of:

Completed by:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

PART B - Optional Discretions

(The four detailed are the most frequently used Regulations, but remain optional – see [LGA Discretions](#) for the full list of optional employer discretions)

Membership Aggregation

Regulation 22 (7)(b),(8)(b)

Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect to join deferred benefits to their current employment/membership

The election to keep separate pension benefits must be made within 12 months of becoming an active member, who must be active at the date of election.

An employer may allow a period longer than 12 months

Employer Policy Decision

Odiham Parish Council will only allow an extension to the 12 month period to separate previous L service where it can be show that the member was no provided with he required information.

(AS PER 2014 POLICY. NOTE THAT ALL PENSION DOCUMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AND ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THE MEMBERS PERSONAL LOGIN)

Transfers of Pension Rights

Regulation 100(6)

Extend normal time limit for acceptance of a transfer value beyond 12 months from joining the LGPS

Where an active member requests to transfer previous pension rights into the LGPS, the member must make a request within in 12 months of becoming an active member.

An employer may allow a longer period than 12 months

Employer Policy Decision

Odiham Parish Council will only allow an extension to the 12 month period to combine previous non-LG service where it can be shown that the member was not provided with the required information.

(AS PER 2014 POLICY. NOTE THAT ALL PENSION DOCUMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AND ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THE MEMBERS PERSONAL LOGIN)

Time limit for a member to elect to purchase additional pension by way of a shared cost additional pension contribution (SCAPC) upon return from a period of absence.

Regulation 16(16) of the LGPS Regulations 2013.

Whether to extend the 30 day deadline for member to elect for a SCAPC upon return from a period of absence from work with permission with no pensionable pay (otherwise than because of illness or injury, relevant child-related leave or reserve forces service leave)

Employer Policy Decision

Odiham Parish Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances. It will not establish a SCAPC scheme for any employee unless there is a clear financial or operational advantage to be gained from doing so.

Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution arrangements

Regulation 17 of the LGPS Regulations 2013 and regulation 15(2A) of the LGPS (Transitional Provisions and Amendment) Regulations 2014

Whether to allow a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (SCAVC) arrangement. To determine how much will be allowed to be contributed to the SCAVC arrangement. To define in what circumstances contribution to a SCAVC arrangement will be allowed.

Employer Policy Decision

Odiham Parish Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances. It will not establish a SCAPC scheme for any employee unless there is a clear financial or operational advantage to be gained from doing so.

- These policies may be subject to review from time to time. Any subsequent change in this Policy Statement will be notified to affected employees.
- If the employer decides to amend the policy, no change can come into effect until one month has passed since the date the amended policy statement was published.
- Any changes to this policy will be notified to the Hampshire Pension Services within 1 month of the change.

Signed on behalf of: Odiham Parish Council

Completed by: Andrea Mann Position: Parish Clerk

Signature: A L Mann (signed electronically in accordance with Council resolution 158/24ii.

Reviewed and adopted 172/25iig

Date:

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HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Reviewed and adopted December 2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Odiham Parish Council:

Odiham Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its members; staff; volunteers; visitors; and for anyone affected by its activities. For the purpose of this Policy, Councillors are defined as volunteers unless otherwise stated.

The Council maintains this policy for the management of health and safety as its top priority and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure effective organisation and planning are established and maintained. The Council will also ensure that appropriate and effective audit and review mechanisms are used to inform the work of the Council, which undertakes to commit appropriate resources to manage health and safety.

Our statement of general policy, below, is based upon that required by virtue of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The principles of the Act and its underpinning Regulations as later published are taken by the Council as a minimum requirement for the safe and effective management of the Council and its activities.

Our statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
- To consult with our staff on matters affecting their health and safety;
- To provide and maintain safe equipment;
- To provide sufficient information, instruction, and supervision of staff, volunteers and visitors as far as is reasonably practical;
- To ensure all staff and volunteers are competent in their Council-related activities, and to provide adequate training as far as is reasonably practical;
- To prevent accidents and activity-related ill health as far as is reasonably practical;
- To maintain safe and healthy conditions for conducting the Council's business and the public facilities it provides; and
- To review and revise this Policy as necessary at regular intervals, but at least annually.

Approved by the Council on:

Signed: *Ellr A McFarlane* Chair

Andrea Mann Responsible Officer

1. Responsibilities

1.1 The full Council has overall responsibility for Health and Safety. The Council:

- Provides a lead in developing a positive health & safety culture through its decisions, policies and individual behaviour.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to implement adequate health & safety systems.

1.2 The Parish Clerk will fulfil the role of 'Competent Person' responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Parish Clerk shall:

- Keep informed of relevant Health and Safety policy legislation and inform the Council accordingly.
- Advise the Council on the resources and arrangements necessary to fulfil the Council's responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work legislation.
- Make effective arrangements to implement this Policy.
- Ensure that matters of Health and Safety are regularly discussed at OPC meetings.
- Ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out of working practices, with subsequent consideration and review of any necessary corrective/protective measures.
- For major works, request method statements from contractors prior to the works starting and retain these in a file.
- Maintain a file of risk assessments for all staff and voluntary activities.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are given access to this policy before starting any task or activity or as soon as practical upon joining the Council.
- Ensure that work activities by the Council do not unreasonably jeopardise the health and safety of members of the public.
- Maintain a central record of notified accidents.
- When an accident or hazardous incident occurs, take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.
- Act as the contact and liaison point for the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

1.3 All employees and voluntary helpers will:

- Co-operate fully with this Policy.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety, to use appropriate personal protective clothing and, where appropriate, ensure that appropriate first aid materials are available.
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their activities.
- Not operate any item or equipment or machinery unless they have been trained or authorised to do so.
- Not misuse any plant, equipment tools or materials so as to cause risks to health and safety or carry out any repairs.
- Not undertake any unauthorised activity or task without prior consent and training.
- Wear appropriate PPE which has been provided to them.
- Report any accidents or hazardous incidents to the Parish Clerk.

- Report to management any medical condition or medication which could affect the safety of themselves or others.
- Co-operate with the management on the implementation of the medical or occupational health providers (employees only).

1.4 When it is necessary to employ, engage or facilitate outside contractors, the Contractor shall:

- Provide a method statement, risk assessments and evidence of Public Liability Insurance not less than £10M.
- Consider all potential hazards imposed upon OPC employees, volunteers or members of the public.
- Ensure all control methods are in place to minimise all risks to OPC employees, volunteers, members of the public and their own staff.
- Ensure their own staff are trained and competent in undertaking the work they have been instructed to carry out.
- Manage the provision of PPE for their workers.
- If necessary, agree to arrange for a building or facility to be closed throughout the works or schedule their works at a time when less footfall is expected.

2. Arrangements

2.1 Risk assessments

- The Parish Clerk will complete a risk assessment for every building, facility and equipment owned by OPC.
- The Parish Clerk will complete risk assessments for all employee activities. In some instances a verbal discussion and agreement on the potential risks and control methods will suffice.
- Risk assessments will be completed for all events and activities by the lead organiser who will act as the H&S Responsible Person at the event.
- Every member of staff and volunteer has a duty to risk assess their own actions before undertaking a new or different task.
- Risk assessments shall be reviewed regularly or following a significant change in circumstances or legislation.

2.2 First aid kit

- A First Aid kit is located in the Parish Office.
- Use of an item from any first aid kit must be notified to the Parish Clerk who will then arrange suitable replenishment.
- It is the duty of the Parish Clerk to ensure that the contents of the office first aid kit is always at least at the prescribed stock level and in date.

2.3 Fire safety

- Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are sited at the specified locations in the Bridewell and are maintained by KBO Fire & Security Ltd.
- Fire extinguishers in the parish room and south chapel are maintained and serviced annually by KBO Fire & Security Ltd.

2.4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE will be provided to all employees and volunteers who are involved in activities where there is a potential risk of injury or exposure to the elements.
- A high viz jacket must be worn for all activities working on, adjacent to or near the highway.

3. Accident and injury at work procedures

3.1 Although every effort will be made to ensure a safe environment, it is accepted that accidents can occur. Accidents and incidents occurring in the OPC offices and/or OPC premises shall be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk or senior employee on duty at the time of the accident.

3.2 If any of the following occur they must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) procedures (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>):

- Fatal accidents.
- A specified injury to an employee as detailed in regulation 4.
- An injury to a non-employee where that person is taken to hospital immediately following the injury.
- Any employee diagnosed as suffering from a disease specified in the Regulations.
- Any employee diagnosed with a cancer caused by work related exposure to a known carcinogen or mutagen.
- Accidents resulting in a period of absence of more than 7 days.
- Injuries to the public where they have to be taken to hospital.
- Some dangerous occurrences.

3.3 All accidents resulting in injury and near misses will be investigated to identify any unsafe acts, equipment or working practices to determine whether changes need to be made to equipment, training or systems of work to reduce, as far as possible, the likelihood of the same occurring in the future.

3.4 All accidents resulting in injury and near misses will be reported to the Council in accordance with OPC's Data Protection Policy.

4. Communication to employees and volunteers:

- The H&S Policy Statement will be published on OPC's website.
- The H&S Law Poster will be displayed on internal noticeboards at The Bridewell.
- A copy of this Policy will be provided to all staff and volunteers carrying out a task or function on behalf of the Council.
- New employees and volunteers will be required to sign to confirm they have read this Policy.
- H&S will be a regular item for discussion in Staff Meetings and meetings of the Staffing Committee.
- Formal H&S training will be offered to staff where this is considered appropriate.

- Any new activity or project involving volunteers will involve a dedicated H&S briefing or training session.
- Any employee seen breaching or showing disregard to this Policy will be spoken to by the Parish Clerk or the Staffing Committee and serious actions may lead to disciplinary action.
- Any volunteer or organisation using the Council's amenities seen breaching or showing disregard to this Policy will be spoken to by a representative of OPC and serious actions may lead to the volunteer or organisation being refused use of OPC's amenities.

5. Hazards and risks

5.1 Fire

Evacuation procedures in the event of outbreak of smoke and/or fire:

- Visitors and other persons in the building should immediately proceed and assemble in an orderly manner to the Mayhill Junior School playground, which is the fire assembly point.
- The Parish Clerk or senior employee should arrange for a register to be called.
- The Parish Clerk or senior employee should ensure the emergency services are summoned.
- Employees and visitors shall not remove a fire appliance from its designated place unless it is to be used in an attempt to extinguish a fire.
- Any use of a fire extinguisher should be reported to the Parish Clerk.

5.2 Display Screen Equipment

OPC complies with the H&S (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 by:

Staff:

- All staff who regularly use DSE as part of their work must complete a DSE risk assessment for their work station to assess and reduce risks of ill health. This should be completed as soon as possible after starting work or following a change in equipment. This should be a home work station where a member of staff has been sanctioned to work from home.
- The risk assessment(s) will be discussed with the Parish Clerk to agree and implement control methods which will minimise risk.
- OPC will offer free eye tests to employees, in accordance with the Regulations, for employees who spend a significant amount of their working day using a display screen.

Volunteers:

- All volunteers who regularly use DSE as part of their work or voluntary activities on Council owned or managed premises must complete a DSE risk assessment for their work station to assess and reduce risks of ill health. This should be completed as soon as possible after starting the voluntary activity or following a change in equipment.

- The risk assessment(s) will be discussed with the person in charge of the voluntary activity to agree and implement control methods which will minimise risk.
- All volunteers who regularly use DSE at home as part of their voluntary activity are encouraged to complete a risk assessment for their home work station. Volunteers should discuss concerns with the person in charge of the voluntary activity for advice on how control methods may help to minimise risk.
- All risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and following any change in circumstances.
- Employees and volunteers should read further details on the DSE Regulations at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm>

5.3 Manual Handling

The incorrect handling of loads causes high numbers of injuries each year and can result in pain, time off work and sometimes permanent disability.

- All employees and regular volunteers will be required to undertake manual handling training.
- Manual handling should be avoided wherever possible but, where operations cannot be avoided, these general principles should be followed:
 - o Assess the load and the task
 - o Plan the route
 - o Position feet
 - o Get a good grip
 - o Keep the load close to the body
 - o Maintain good posture throughout the procedure
 - o Use the leg muscles
 - o Use body momentum
- Where it is possible to move a load without lifting the load should be pushed and not pulled.

5.4 Driving for Work

- All employees required to drive as part of their working day, either as part of their normal duties or when driving to and from a meeting or training event etc shall provide a copy of their driving licence to the Parish Clerk.
- No member of staff or volunteer disqualified from driving will be permitted to drive for work related activities whatsoever or permitted to drive any Council owned vehicle.
- Employees and volunteers driving their own vehicles for work related activities should ensure they hold the relevant insurance cover and provide a copy to the Council.
- Employees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring their own vehicles are road worthy with a valid MOT certificate where required and should not volunteer to drive for work related activities if they are aware of any issues.
- Employees and volunteers should not drive for work related activities if they are tired, feeling unwell or under the influence of drugs, alcohol or prescribed medication which affects their ability to drive.

- Any employee or volunteer driving to work related appointments should prioritise safety over time and never rush to make an appointment on time.

5.5 Working at Height

Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries. Common causes are falls from ladders and through fragile roofs. Generally, Council employees and volunteers have limited need to work from heights themselves and as such should avoid working at height where it is reasonably practical to do so.

OPC acknowledges the following tasks require staff or volunteers to work from height:

- Displaying flags on the High Street.
- Arranging books.
- Setting up/clearing away from events.
- Managing the Speed Indicator Device (SID).

Where work at height cannot be avoided:

- Use the correct equipment – for use in The Bridewell a kick step should be sufficient.
- Ensure the equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job.
- Don't overload or overreach.
- Take precautions when working near fragile surfaces.
- Provide protection from falling objects.
- Consider space to fall should be by clearing space around the ladder or kick step.
- When a ladder is required, always ensure a second person is present to hold the ladder stable.

5.6 Lone Working (refer to separate Lone Working Policy)

There are frequent occasions when employees are lone working, either in the parish office or on site. In this situation to ensure employees are as safe as possible all members of staff must ensure they:

- Have access to a working phone; for off-site workers this shall be a mobile phone.
- Outside of the public opening hours for the office, ensure that the Bridewell door is locked.
- The front and rear parish office doors should remain locked at all times.
- Inform a second person where they are working and how long they expect to be lone working.
- When working in The Bridewell, always ensure the sign at the front door indicates when someone is in the building.

5.7 Smoking

- OPC complies with the legislation that became law in July 2007 therefore smoking is not permitted in any part of OPC owned or managed buildings.

5.8 Drugs and Alcohol

- No non-prescription drugs are permitted in any Council owned or managed buildings at any time.
- No alcohol should be consumed on the premises unless by prior agreement for pre-arranged functions or events.
- Anyone found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be subject to gross misconduct charges or asked to step down from voluntary activities.

5.9 Premises

- The office should be kept clean and tidy.
- The office temperature should be at least 16C in accordance with HSE guidance. There is no H&S guidance on the maximum temperature but staff and volunteers should raise any concerns with line management.
- Office windows should have blinds or other shading systems in good working order.
- Outside access to the building must be safe and properly maintained.
- Stairs and corridors must be unobstructed.
- All cables, leads and wires should be properly secured so that they do not constitute a trip hazard.
- All filing cabinets, shelves and cupboards should be stable and secure and kept closed when not in use.
- Any spillage must be mopped up and the floor dried.

5.10 Dangerous substances

- Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended), OPC must conduct a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health from exposure to any hazardous substance.
- COSHH sheets will be sourced wherever possible and used to assess potential harm and substances will only be used where necessary.
- This list is not exhaustive, but substances used by OPC may include: Tippex, photocopier toner, weed killer, paint, WD40, de-icer, glass cleaning fluids and cleaning solvent.
- All lids/tops must be properly secured after a substance has been used and should be stored safely and clearly labelled in a secure place.
- Photocopier toner can cause eye and skin irritation. The photocopier toner cartridge should be changed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions; in addition, vinyl or rubber gloves should be worn during this operation.

5.11 Electrical Equipment

- No employee or volunteer should use any electrical appliance which they have not been authorised to use.
- No employee or volunteer should carry out any repair to any electrical appliance on Council owned property.
- Lighting sockets must not be left empty: a suitable bulb or fluorescent tube must be in place.
- Any faulty equipment, wiring, plugs or bulbs must be reported to the Parish Clerk.
- All electrical equipment will be PAT tested annually.

5.12 New and expectant mothers

- Expectant mothers should make their employer aware they are pregnant as soon as practical in order for any required adjustments to be made.
- Each workstation will be assessed and OPC will strive to make all reasonable adjustments to work stations or working practices which may cause harm to them or their unborn child.
- A new or expectant mother should not lift heavy loads, stand for long periods of time or do anything they consider will be a risk to them or their unborn child.
- OPC will consider temporarily adjusting working conditions or offer suitable alternative work if this is deemed necessary.

5.13 Disabilities

- OPC will make all reasonable adjustments for disabled workers and volunteers.
- Employees and volunteers must make OPC aware they have a disability in order for OPC to make these adjustments and may call on third party professional advice if required.

5.14 Working Time Regulations

All employees and volunteers will adhere to the Working Time Regulations which limits the working time to less than 48 hours per week, requires set rest hours, holiday entitlement, rest periods, 11 hours between shifts in any 24 hour periods and rest break if working over 6 hours.

The full legislation can be viewed at
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1998/1833/contents/made>

5.15 Home Working

This policy applies to employees who are equipped and authorised to work from home. Anyone requiring advice or support to help meet best H&S standards at home should speak to the Parish Clerk or their appointed Councillor support or committee.

5.16 Stress

OPC acknowledges its legal duty to protect employees from stress at work. The HSE defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”.

There are six main areas of work design which effect stress levels:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

Stress affects people differently and signs of stress will display differently in different people, a person suffering with stress may not even be aware themselves.

Any employee suffering from stress should speak to the Parish Clerk to discuss what reasonable control methods can be put in place.

Failure to resolve stress in the workplace through reasonable control methods may be referred to the Staffing Committee in confidence.

Further detail is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/what-to-do.htm>

5.17 Infectious Diseases/Illness

Staff and volunteers must not knowingly come to work or join a voluntary activity whilst infected with a contagious disease or illness.

Covid-19

Although HSE will no longer expect COVID-19 control measures, employers must continue to consult workers and their representatives on any changes they make that might affect health and safety

Any member of staff or Councillor testing positive with Covid should not attend the office or any OPC meeting. Staff and Councillors should only return to the office or attend meetings once they have a negative test (PCR or LFT).

6 Contractors

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 section 3 OPC recognises its responsibility for the health and safety of contractors and anyone else that could be affected by their activities. However, this does not absolve contractors from the legal responsibilities for health and safety.

Before awarding a contract, OPC will:

- i Identify the level and scope of works and create a detailed job description including health & safety implications.
- ii Review the contractor's schedule of works prior to starting works. Ideally OPC will see a method statement.
- iii Checks will be undertaken to ensure and verify the contractor's competency to carry out the specified works. This may include seeking references.
- iv For larger projects or major works, the contractor should provide a risk assessment and health & safety policy prior to starting work.
- v Check proof of adequate insurance before work begins. This should include public liability and, if necessary, professional indemnity insurance.

At the start of the works, OPC will

- vi Carry out an induction of the site.

- vii Carry out an inspection to ensure safe working methods ie use of PPE and barriers to keep members of the public safe.
- viii Ensure OPC staff, councillors and contractors' own staff are clear about who is supervising the works.

7 Monitoring and evaluation

- 7.1 It will be necessary for OPC to determine, from time to time, whether or not health and safety responsibilities are being discharged properly. Monitoring may take place through a number of mechanisms, including spot checks on employee behaviour, a full safety inspection and reports to the full Council by the Parish Clerk.
- 7.2 Reports of all accidents, near-misses and sickness linked to work shall be monitored on a regular basis. Recommendations may follow on the need for greater safeguards, more training or the need to change an employee's work practices.
- 7.3 Employees shall be consulted on any proposed changes to this policy.

8 Review

The full Council shall review this policy at least once a year from the date of adoption or following a change in legislation or circumstances.



ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL LONE WORKING POLICY

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Purpose of this policy and procedure

The council recognises that some of our staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

The scope of this policy

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

Policy

We will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
- A groundsman tending to green space
- Office workers who work alone in the premises, and,
- Homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:



Managers

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Lone workers

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any instruction given by management or the council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone where there is adequate information to undertake a risk assessment.
- Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

Staff

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
- Buddies should ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.



People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will devise and implement a lone working plan that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for a groundsman lone working with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

Below are some example strategies that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Signing-in and Out book
- Electronic (or hard copy) diaries to be kept up to date with meeting/visit/lone working details
- Agreed times and method of contact
- Buddy scheme

Buddy scheme

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy, next of kin and manager (see the Lone Working Buddy Form):-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If you change your contact details, you must let your buddy and manager know.



In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about your lone working, that may include;

- where you are going (address or area if there is no address);
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting);
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting);
- your mode of transport;
- when you are expected to return;

Your buddy must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and,
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, buddy or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.



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



Child, Young Person & Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy

Adopted on 15.12.20

Reviewed and adopted 19.12.23

1.0 Introduction

As an organisation that sometimes works with children, young people and vulnerable adults, OPC's Councillors, staff and volunteers acknowledge that all children, young people and adults have an absolute right to be safe from harm.

OPC believes that all individuals regardless of age, disability, gender and gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief or sexual orientation, should have the greatest possible control over their lives. They should be able to make informed decisions or be supported to make these decisions if unable to do so themselves, without fear of harm or abuse from others.

OPC recognises its duty of care and will take all necessary steps to ensure that everyone with whom it works is enabled to be emotionally and physically safe.

2.0 Policy Statement

OPC is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable persons are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council.

OPC will endeavour to achieve this by:

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring Councillors, staff and volunteers who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be subject to the appropriate level Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Ensuring all Councillors, staff and volunteers adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and themselves against false allegations.

2.1 Policy Aims

This Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is provided as part of an induction package to Councillors, staff and volunteers who will have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults.

The aims are:

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities and sessions held by OPC.
- To ensure children and vulnerable persons are listened to and kept safe from harm.
- To ensure Councillors, staff and volunteers, who work with children and vulnerable persons, are well informed, supported and enabled to exhibit the best possible practice.

2.3 Policy Objectives

The objectives are:

- To raise the level of awareness of Councillors, staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of Councillors, staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from.

- To ensure that, in conjunction with the OPC's Safeguarding Code of Practice, all Councillors, staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

3.0 Good Practice

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. All those working in Council organised activities that may involve children, young people and vulnerable adults will be asked to read OPC's Safeguarding Code of Practice which includes observing the following more specific examples of care which should be taken when working with children:

3.1 You should:

- Always be publicly open when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children should not be left unattended however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- Where possible ensure parents are responsible for their children at all times.
- Where possible ensure carers are responsible for vulnerable adults.
- If unforeseeable occasions arise where a parent is unable to be with their child make sure that Councillors, staff and volunteers work in pairs when supervising the child/ren.
- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be a male and female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.

4.0 Users of Odiham Parish Council's Facilities

- All hirers and users of Council facilities will be made aware of OPC's Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy at the time of booking.
- Regular hirers and users of OPC facilities will be required to produce evidence at the time of booking the Council facilities, of their own Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy if the purpose of the hire, use or activity is for children or vulnerable adults.
- Hire agreements for regular hirers or users will be reviewed annually.
- Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the hirer or user being refused permission to use OPC facilities.

5.0 What to do if you have concerns

All staff, volunteers and elected Members of the Council have a responsibility to report their concerns to the relevant authorities or pass on any concerns raised with them. Where someone feels unable or unwilling to make this report directly, they may report concerns to the Clerk and/or the Chair of the Council, who will refer the matter to the Police or Hampshire County Council Children's Services or Adult Services, as the appropriate authority.

Where a concern relates to a member of staff or Councillor, this should also be reported to the Clerk and/or Chair of the Council where reports will be handled in the strictest confidence, or the Deputy Clerk or Deputy Chair of the Council should the concern involve the Clerk or the Chair.

The contact details of which are shown at the foot of this policy.

5.1 USEFUL CONTACTS

Hampshire County Council:

Children's Services Tel 0300 555 1384

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren>

Adult Services Tel 0300 555 1386

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/contact>

Out of Hours Service

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Tel 0300 555 1373

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/safeguarding/mash-adults>

Hampshire Constabulary:

In an EMERGENCY 999

Non-Emergency 101

6.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or when new legislation or guidance is issued.



**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
POLICY**
Reviewed and adopted 18.11.25

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Odiham Parish Council values training and development for staff and councillors. The Council will ensure that staff and councillors are provided with the means to develop and enhance their skills and abilities to deliver high quality services, management skills to plan those services, kept informed of all new and changes to legislation and also to further develop the OPC's Strategic Plan.

1.2 The intention of this policy is to provide a framework for identifying training needs for staff and councillors.

1.3 Odiham Parish Council recognises its duty to provide equal access for all councillors and staff to training and development in accordance with equal opportunities legislation.

2. COMMITMENT

2.1 Odiham Parish Council is committed to developing its staff and councillors in order to assist the Council in achieving its aims and priorities.

2.2 The Council will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access training to meet the particular demands of their job or role.

2.3 The Council will provide resources to enable staff and councillors to access relevant training, support and sources of information.

3. STAFF TRAINING

3.1 New members of staff will receive on-the-job training as an induction which will include compulsory H&S training required by law. They will also be encouraged to attend training provided locally by Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and by the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC). For staff who are new to the sector, this could include attending the two 'What You Need to Know' sessions. Additional training sessions relevant to the individual's particular role and experience include: minute-taking, finance, planning, cemetery management and health and safety.

3.2 As part of their on-going development, members of staff are required to be proactive in identifying training courses, workshops, briefings, etc which will support them in effective delivery of services. All staff can access the HALC calendar of training which is available online and can ask to enrol on a course relevant to their role or personal development at any time throughout the year. Decisions will be made subject to available training budget and other work commitments and, where necessary, decisions will be referred to the Staffing Committee for consideration.

3.3 Training is also available through 'webinars', on-line modules and discussion forums. This method of training is often a simple and cost effective way of attending a short course or update.

3.4 The Parish Clerk is CiLCA qualified and Odiham Parish Council would expect anyone recruited to this position to hold this qualification

3.5 In addition to formal courses, Officer updates, networking meetings, Councillor updates and sector specific AGMs are also useful.

3.6 Training needs will be considered throughout the year where training will allow staff to meet a gap in skills when the Council starts a new project or provide a new service. Training needs will routinely form part of the annual staff appraisal.

3.7 OPC will consider staff requests for financial support for training and decisions will be dependent on the training supporting the Council and the individual in fulfilling their role and personal development.

3.8 Where OPC funds training over the value of £500:

- i) The employee must re-pay 75% of the course fee if they leave OPC within 1 year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.
- ii) The employee must re-pay 50% of the course fee if they leave OPC within 2 years year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.

3.9 Staff will be allowed reasonable time off work to attend work related training courses. This does not apply to course assigned homework or time to prepare course portfolios.

COUNCILLOR TRAINING

4.1 New councillors receive an induction pack including printed material and links to OPC's policies and key documents

New councillors are also invited to meet with the Parish Clerk to receive an overview of the Council.

4.2 All new councillors are encouraged to attend HALC's 'The Knowledge' and 'Core Skills' course which give an introduction to the essentials a councillor should know. These two sessions may be delivered in-house by arrangement with HALC.

4.3 All Councillors are strongly advised to attend training on GDPR, covering their role as a Councillor.

4.4 Councillors who chair meetings, either of the full Council or of a committee of the Council, are advised of the relevant training and are recommended to attend HALC's 'Chairing Skills'.

4.5 All councillors who are members of the Planning Committee are encouraged to attend HALC's sessions to support their knowledge of planning matters. The sessions available currently are 'Basic Planning for Local Councils' and 'The Planning Framework'.

4.6 All councillors who are members of the Staffing Committee must attend HALC's 'The Council as an Employer' course at the earliest opportunity or evidence recent completion of other industry-appropriate employment training.

4.7 All councillors involved in financial matters (eg as bank signatories) should attend 'Local Finance for Councillors' run by HALC.

4.8 OPC's H&S Policy covering all OPC's activities provides guidance on H&S practices. OPC will consider all reasonable requests for further H&S related training.

4.7 Other training will be identified for councillors as needed. Councillors are required to actively participate in identifying their training and development needs.

5. RESOURCES

5.1 The Council provides an annual budget for training and development.

5.2 The training budget takes into account the following factors:

- the identified training and development needs of staff and councillors (eg for an election year it would be anticipated that an increase in the budget would be required to accommodate training for new councillors)
- training and development needs which are essential to improve and progress the agreed policies and strategies of the Council
- high priority training needs arising from legislation
- high priority training due to health & safety, financial or reputational risk
- the costs of training, development and learning.

5.3 In addition to the cost of training courses, Odiham Parish Council covers associated travel and parking costs for agreed attendance at training.

5.4 The Council pays the subscription to relevant publications and to advice services such as HALC, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the SLCC (subject to annual agreement by the Staffing Committee).

5.5 The Council pays a subscription to “Onboarding”, a learning management system.

5.6 ‘Local Council Administration’ by Charles Arnold Baker and other relevant publications are provided for reference and remain the property of the Council. Magazines including SLCC’s ‘The Clerk’, NALC’s ‘LCR’ and ‘Clerks and Councils Direct’ are examples.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Parish Clerk maintains a record of training undertaken by councillors and staff.

6.2 Training undertaken will be evaluated to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness.

6.3 Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation, new qualifications, complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs.

7. DATE OF REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.



COMMUNICATION CONSENT FORM

Your privacy is important to us and we would like to communicate with you about the council and its activities. To do so we need your consent. Please fill in your name and address and other contact information below and confirm your consent by ticking the boxes below.

If you are aged 13 or under your parent or guardian should fill in their details below to confirm their consent.

Name	
Address	
Signature	
Date	

Please confirm your consent below. You can grant consent to any or all of the purposes listed. You can find out more about how we use your data from our "Privacy Notice" which is available from the council Office or on our website at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council/policies-and-publications>

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the council office.

- ❖ We may wish to keep you informed about what is going on in the council's area or other local authority areas including news, events, meetings, clubs, groups and activities. These communications may also sometimes appear on our website, or in printed or electronic form (including social media).
- ❖ We may contact you about groups and activities you may be interested in participating in.
- ❖ We may use your name and photo in our newsletters, bulletins or on our website, or our social media accounts (for example our Facebook page).

Keeping in touch:

- Yes please, I would like to receive communications by email
- Yes please, I would like to receive communications by telephone
- Yes please, I would like to receive communications by mobile phone including text message
- Yes please, I would like to receive communications by post
- Yes please, I would like to receive communications by social media e.g. Facebook.

The completed form should be returned to clerk@odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk or returned to Odiham Parish Council, The Bridewell, The Bury, Odiham. RG29 1NB.



PRIVACY NOTICE
For Staff*, Cllrs and For Role Holders**

Reviewed and adopted on 18th July 2023

* Staff: employees and agency staff - all retained on permanent or temporary contracts

** Role Holders: includes volunteers, contractors, former staff and former Cllrs. Also includes applicants or candidates for these roles.

Your Personal Data – what is it?

“Personal data” is any information about a living individual which allows them to be identified from that data alone or by combining it with other information (e.g name, photograph, video, email address).

The processing of personal data is governed by legislation relating to personal data which includes the General Data Protection Regulation – effective from 25 May 2018.

Who are we?

This Privacy Notice is provided to you by Odiham Parish Council which is the data controller for your data. This means that OPC decides how your data is processed and for what purpose. This Parish Council takes the protection of your data seriously.

Principles of GDPR

Odiham Parish Council will comply with data protection law and as such when handling personal data, we will ensure that:

- It is processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way.
- It is only used for the specific purpose of which you are aware and not further processed without your permission
- It is relevant and limited to what is necessary for the specified purpose.
- It is accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- It is only kept for as long as is necessary for that purpose.
- It is kept and subsequently destroyed securely; and measures are in place to protect it from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure.

Personal Data we process

- Names, titles and aliases, photographs and images;
- Start/leaving dates;
- Contact details such as telephone numbers, addresses and email addresses;
- Where relevant to our legal obligations, data on gender, age, date of birth, marital status, nationality, education/work history, academic/professional qualifications, dependants;
- Non-financial identifiers such as passport numbers, driving licence numbers, taxpayer identification numbers, tax reference codes & NI numbers;
- Financial identifiers such as bank account numbers, payment card numbers;
- Financial information such as National Insurance number, pay and pay records, tax code, tax and benefits contributions and expense claims;
- Other operational personal data created, obtained or otherwise processed in course of normal activities, including IP addresses and website visit histories, logs of visitors, accident records and insurance claims;
- Next of kin and emergency contact information;
- Recruitment information;
- Other staff data including performance management information, information for disciplinary or grievance proceedings, employment status.

How we use your personal data?

The Parish Council processes your data for some or all of the following purposes:

- Making decisions about your appointment;
- Determining the terms of which you work for us;
- Checking your legality to work in the UK;
- Paying you and if you are an employee, deducting tax, NI and pension contributions;
- Providing any contractual benefits to you;
- Administering the contract that we have entered into with you;
- Managing and planning, including accounting and auditing;
- Conducting performance reviews and managing performance;
- Making decisions about salary reviews and compensation;
- Assessing qualifications for a particular job or task;
- Conducting grievance or disciplinary proceedings;

- Making decisions about your continued employment;
- Making arrangements for the termination of our working relationship;
- Education, training and development requirements;
- Dealing with legal disputes, involving you, including accidents at work;
- Ascertaining your fitness to work;
- Managing sickness absence;
- Complying with health and safety obligations;
- To prevent fraud;
- To ensure network and information security;
- To undertake activity consistent with our statutory functions and powers including any delegated functions;
- To maintain our own records and accounts;
- To seek your views or comments;
- To administer Cllr's interests;
- To process a job application;
- To provide a reference;

Some of the above grounds will overlap and there may be several grounds which justify our use of your personal data.

We will only use your personal data when the law allows us to. Most commonly, we will use your personal data in the following circumstances:

- Where we need to perform a contract that we have entered into with you;
- Where we need to comply with a legal obligation.

How we process sensitive personal data

- We may process sensitive personal data relating to staff, Cllrs or role holders including as appropriate:
 - Information about your physical or mental health or condition in order to monitor sick leave or take decisions about fitness to work;
 - Your racial or ethnic origin or religious or similar information in order to monitor compliance with equal opportunities legislation;
 - In order to comply with legal requirements and obligations to third parties;
- These types of data are described in the GDPR as 'Special categories of data' and require higher levels of protection. We need to have further justification for collecting, storing and using this type of data;
- We may process special categories of personal data in the following circumstances:
 - With your explicit written consent;
 - Where we need to fulfil our legal obligations;
 - Where it is needed in the public interest, such as equal opportunities monitoring;
 - Where it is needed to assess your working capacity on health grounds, subject to appropriate confidentiality safeguards.
- Less commonly, we may process this type of data where it is needed in relation to legal claims or to protect your interests (or someone else's) and you are not capable of giving your consent, or where you have already made the information public.

Please note: it is not a condition of your contract with us that you agree to any request for consent from us to process your personal data.

Information about criminal convictions

- We may only use personal data relating to criminal convictions where the law allows.
- We may use personal data relating to criminal convictions where it is necessary in relation to legal claims, to protect your interests or someone else's and you are not capable of giving your consent or have already made the information public.
- We will only collect personal data about criminal convictions if it is appropriate given the nature of the role and where we are legally able to do so. Typically, and where appropriate we will collect this personal data as part of the recruitment process.

The Legal Basis for processing your personal data

- Some of our processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.

- We may also process personal data if it is necessary for the performance of a contract with you, or to take steps to enter into a contract.
- We will also process your data in order to assist you in fulfilling your role in the council including administrative support or for compliance with a legal obligation.

Sharing your personal data

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential. We will only share your data with third parties where it is necessary for the performance of the data controllers' task or where you first give us consent. It is likely that we will share your data with the following data controllers:

- Our agents, suppliers and contractors. Eg, for outsourced HR functions or managing our IT systems and software;
- Other local authorities – mainly Hart District Council and Hampshire County Council;
- HMRC;
- Staff pension providers – Hampshire Pension Fund;
- Former and prospective employers;
- DBS service suppliers;
- Recruitment agencies;
- Professional advisers;
- Trade unions or employee representatives;

How long do we keep your personal data?

We will only retain personal data for as long as is deemed necessary. We are legally obliged to keep some records permanently and financial records for 7 years for tax purposes.

Details of our data retention periods can be found in our Document Retention Policy and our Data Protection Policy.

When personal data is no longer needed it will be destroyed or deleted in a secure manner.

Your responsibilities

It is important that the personal data we hold about you is accurate and current. Please keep us informed if your personal data changes during your working relationship with us.

Your rights and your personal data

Under GDPR you have the following rights with respect to your personal data:

Please note: when exercising any of the rights listed below, we may require you to verify your identity for security purposes. In such cases we will need you to prove your identity before you can exercise these rights.

- 1. The right to access personal data we hold on you**
 - At any point you can contact us to request a copy of the personal data Odiham Parish Council holds on you. Once we have received your request we will respond within one month.
 - There are no fees or charges for the request although unfounded or excessive requests may be subject to an administrative fee.
- 2. The right to correct and update the personal data we hold on you**
 - If the data we hold on you is out of date, incomplete or incorrect, you can inform us and your data will be updated.
- 3. The right to have your personal data erased**
 - If you feel that we should no longer be using your personal data or that we are unlawfully using it, you can request that we erase the personal data we hold.
 - When we receive your request, we will confirm whether the personal data has been deleted or give a reason why it cannot be destroyed.
- 4. The right to object to processing of your personal data or to restrict it use**
 - You have the right to request that we stop processing your personal data or ask us to restrict processing.
 - Upon receipt of your request we will confirm whether we are able to comply or if we have a legal obligation to continue to process your data.
- 5. The right to data portability**
 - You have the right to request that we transfer some of your data to another controller.
 - We will comply with your request within one month, where it is feasible to do so.
- 6. The right to withdraw your consent at any time to the processing of your data**

- You can withdraw the consent you previously gave us by contacting the office by telephone, email or by post (contact details below).
- 7. The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office**
- You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or via its website email service <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or by post to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Transfer of Data Abroad

All personal data will be placed on systems within the UK or European Economic Area. However, it should be noted that our website is accessible from overseas, so some personal data may be accessed abroad.

Further Processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Privacy Notice, then we will provide you with a separate notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

Contact Details

To exercise all relevant rights or if you have any questions about this Privacy Notice, please contact:

The Parish Clerk

Odiham Parish Council

The Bridewell

The Bury

Odiham

RG29 1NB

Email: clerk@odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Changes to this notice

We keep this Privacy Notice under regular review and will place any updates on this web page.

Last update July 2023.



SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST POLICY

Reviewed and adopted on 18th July 2023

1. Introduction

Under Data Protection laws individuals may request information about the personal data processed by the Parish Council (a subject access request). Under GDPR the council must now respond without undue delay and in any case within one calendar month of receipt of the request.

2. Responding to a Subject Access Request

- Where a request is made electronically, the information should be provided by electronic means where possible, unless otherwise requested by the data subject.
- The information must be communicated in a concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible form, using clear and plain language.
- The right to obtain a copy of information should not adversely affect the rights and freedoms of others. Personal data about a third party must be redacted from any information provided unless the third party has agreed to its inclusion.

3. Fees

- Information must be provided free of charge under the GDPR.
- A reasonable fee may be charged if the request from a data subject is “manifestly unfounded or excessive”. A reasonable fee can also be charged for supplying further copies of the same information. The fee must be based upon the actual administrative cost of providing the information.

4. Timescale

- The information requested must be provided without delay and at the latest within one month of receipt of the request.
- The timescale can be extended up to three months if the information requested is complex or numerous, but the subject must be told within one month how much extra time is required and why.
- The date of receipt of the request is when the request has been proven to be valid.

5. Identification of Requester

Personal data can only be disclosed to the relevant person, so the data controller should request further information to confirm their identity.

6. Summary of Requirements

- On receipt a subject access request, it must be forwarded immediately to the data controller;
- Correctly identify whether a request has been made under the Data Protection legislation;
- An exhaustive search of all records must be made to locate the personal data;
- All personal data that has been requested must be provided unless an exemption can be supplied;
- The response must be made within one month after accepting that the request is valid;
- Subject Access Requests must be undertaken free of charge to the requestor unless the legislation permits reasonable fees to be charged.
- Cllrs and managers must ensure that all staff are aware of and follow this guidance.
- Where the requester is not satisfied with a response to a SAR, the council must manage this as a complaint.

Subject Access Request Procedure

1. Receipt of SAR:

Upon receipt of request – notify the Executive Officer who will organise the process. Requests must be in writing.

2. Log the Request

Enter details of the request in the SAR log.

3. Confirmation of Requirement

If necessary, clarify with the requestor what personal data they need.

4. Identification

The requestor must provide his/her address and supply valid evidence to prove their identity. The council accepts the following forms of ID:

- Current UK/EEA passport
- UK driving licence – photocard or paper
- EEA National Identity Card
- Council tax bill/demand or statement (dated in last 12 months)
- Financial statement – bank, building society or credit card (dated in past 3 months)
- Mortgage statement (dated in last 12 months)
- Tenancy agreement
- Utility bill (dated last 3 months)
- HMRC tax credit document or state benefits/pension entitlement document (dated in last 12 months)
- HMRC tax notification document (last 12 months)

NB. The request is only valid from the date the identity has been confirmed.

5. Confirmation of Fees

Requests are normally free of charge unless the request is “manifestly excessive or unfounded”. The subject must be informed of this.

6. Confirmation of Timescale

Following the validation of the request, the council has one calendar month to respond. If more time is needed, the subject must be told within the first month.

7. Information Search

- Carry out a full and exhaustive search of all records - paper and electronic. This will involve searching emails (incl. archived or deleted where recoverable), word documents, spreadsheets, databases, systems, removable media (memory sticks, CDs etc.), recordings and all paper records in relevant filing systems.
- No personal data should be withheld unless an exemption can be applied. Redact any exempt personal data from the documents to be released.

8. Provision of Information

- You must not withhold personal data because you believe it will be misunderstood; instead you should provide an explanation with the personal data. The data must be provided in an “intelligible form” i.e. explaining codes, acronyms or complex terms.
- The data must be supplied in a permanent form except where agreement is reached with the subject that this would be impossible or involve undue effort in which case they may view files on our premises or on screen. You must redact any exempt personal data from the released documents and explain why that personal data is being withheld.
- If any data has been withheld, you must explain why there is an exemption(s).
- Covering letters must include the following information:
 - The categories of personal data held;
 - The reasons for holding the data;
 - To whom this data has been disclosed (or will be disclosed);
 - The length of time the data will be stored (where possible);

- From whom the data has been collected (if not from the subject);
- The subject's rights to object or to have data corrected or erased;
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICON).

9. Update Log

Ensure the log lists the details of the SAR, the necessary dates and all documentation provided.

10. Complaint

If the requestor is not satisfied with the response to the SAR, the council must treat this as a complaint which is covered by the complaints procedure.



Odiham Parish Council

Disciplinary policy and procedure

1. Policy

The Council aims to ensure that there will be a fair and consistent approach to the enforcement of standards of conduct and performance in the Council. This policy and procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. This procedure sets out the action that will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached.

Matters which may be dealt with under this policy include discipline and dismissal for the following reasons (please note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Misconduct
- Sub-standard performance
- Harassment or victimisation
- Misuse of council facilities, including computer facilities (e.g. email and internet)
- Poor timekeeping
- Unauthorised absence

2. Principles

- Informal action will be offered, where appropriate, to resolve problems.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated and a disciplinary hearing has taken place.
- For formal action the employee 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.
- Employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of meetings.
- At all stages of the procedure the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, or work colleague.
- Any mitigating circumstances will be taken into account when reaching decisions on appropriate disciplinary penalties.
- No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.
- An employee will have the right to appeal against any discipline imposed.
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

3. Procedure

Informal stage

Minor faults will be dealt with informally. Where the matter is more serious the following procedure will be used.

3.1 Stage 1

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 employee will be advised that it constitutes the first stage of the formal procedure. A record of the improvement note will be kept for six months, 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 in writing and set out the nature of the misconduct and the change in behaviour 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 record of the warning will be kept, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after six months.

3.2 Final written warning

If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve performance to the prescribed standard during the currency of a prior warning, a final written warning may be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will also warn that failure to improve may lead to dismissal (or some other action short of dismissal) and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct or performance. In exceptional cases the period may be longer.

3.3 Dismissal or other sanction

If there is still further misconduct or failure to improve performance to the prescribed standards the final step in the procedure may be dismissal or some other action short of dismissal such as demotion or disciplinary suspension or transfer (as allowed in the contract of employment). The employee will be provided, as soon as reasonably practicable, with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which his or her employment will terminate (in accordance with the employee's notice entitlement), and will be notified of his or her right of appeal.

If some sanction short of dismissal is imposed, the employee will receive details of the complaint, will be warned that dismissal could result if there is no satisfactory improvement, and will be advised of the right of appeal. A copy of the written warning will be kept but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after twelve months subject to achievement and sustainment of satisfactory conduct or performance.

Gross misconduct

The following list provides some examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- theft or fraud
- physical violence or bullying
- deliberate and serious damage to property
- serious misuse of an organisation's property or name
- deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material
- serious insubordination
- unlawful discrimination or harassment
- bringing the organisation into serious disrepute
- serious incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs
- causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence
- a serious breach of health and safety rules
- a serious breach of confidence.

This list is not intended to be an exhaustive one and only gives an indication of the types of offence that may be considered gross misconduct.

If the employee is accused of gross misconduct, the Council may suspend him or her from work with pay while it investigates the alleged offence. This will be as brief as possible, normally for no more than five working days, and the Council will explain its reasons in writing. The employee shall not attend his or her place of work during suspension, other than for the purpose of attending disciplinary proceedings, including investigatory interviews. The employee shall not contact any other employees or contacts of the Council, except the employee's companion, without the Council's consent.

If, on completion of the investigation and the full disciplinary procedure, the Council is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal, i.e. dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Disciplinary investigations

The Council is committed to ensuring that all potential infringements of disciplinary rules are fully investigated. This may entail carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and managers, as well as analysing written records and information. It may also involve a search of the employee's person and/or property. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

Where an employee is called to attend an investigatory interview, it will be made clear that this is not a disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary hearing

An employee will be invited, in writing, to a disciplinary hearing once the investigations are complete. Prior to the meeting the employee will be informed of the nature of the allegations that are to be addressed. The disciplinary hearing will be conducted by members of the Council's Disciplinary Panel.

Appeals

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision must do so within five working days. Members of the Appeals Panel will hear all appeals and their decision is final. At the appeal any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed.

If the employee wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision, he or she must do so through the Appeals Panel within five working days of the receipt of the disciplinary letter. The appeal should be made in writing, stating the ground(s) on which the disciplinary penalty should be reviewed.

Members of the Appeals Panel will hear the appeal. In the rare circumstances where this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be agreed with the employee and his or her companion.

The appeals hearing will be normally held within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final.

Appeals hearing

At the appeals hearing, the employee will be given opportunity to state the ground(s) on which the appeal is made. The Disciplinary Panel who took the original decision will then have the opportunity to explain their decision to impose the given penalty. The members of the Appeals Panel conducting the appeal may exercise discretion as to whether or not the two parties will be present together during the proceedings. The hearing will be adjourned when all the evidence has been heard. The members of the Appeals Panel conducting the appeal will consider the merits of the appeal, in private, before reaching a decision.

The members of the Appeals Panel will, whenever possible, verbally inform the employee of the decision reached and confirm this in writing no later than five working days after the hearing.

The members of the Appeals Panel has the authority to quash or reduce a disciplinary penalty or, in exceptional and appropriate circumstances, to increase it, in accordance with the penalties specified in the Council's disciplinary procedure.

An appeal hearing is intended to focus on specific factors that the employee feels have received insufficient consideration, such as:

- an inconsistent/inappropriate harsh penalty
- extenuating circumstances
- bias of the disciplining manager
- unfairness of the hearing
- new evidence subsequently coming to light.

Where an appeal against dismissal fails, the effective date of termination shall be the date on which the employee was originally dismissed.

Notes

1. Employees will receive a written invitation to all disciplinary meetings
2. Outcomes of formal meetings will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

3. The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Each party can request an extension of the permitted timescale, however, where there are good reasons.
4. The Council reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the disciplinary procedure, in the interests of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all those concerned.
5. For employees during their first year of employment, the Council reserves the right to speed up the decision making process and may choose to follow a shortened version of the above procedure.
6. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions. That is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, the employee has a complaint against the behaviour of a manager during the course of a disciplinary case, they may raise it as a grievance with a senior manager. If necessary, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period until the grievance can be considered. Another manager may be brought in to deal with the disciplinary case.

Abuse of this policy

Any abuse in the application of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with The Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

Alterations and amendments to this policy

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. The Council reserves the right to amend or withdraw this Policy at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the council.

Additional information

For further information, please contact the Parish Clerk or Staffing Committee, c/o the Chair.



Odiham Parish Council

Grievance policy and procedure

1. Policy

It is the Council's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. The Council will try to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.

If employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage. It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the grievance hearing(s).

Certain kinds of grievance cannot be dealt with under this procedure either because it is inappropriate or because there are already established agreements for the settlement of disputes in relation to them. Examples of these are: -

- Matters not relating to employment or matters over which the Council has no control
- Disciplinary matters
- Queries relating to statutory deductions from pay or rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level
- Matters relating to the pension scheme(s)

3. Relates policies and procedures

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Council's [insert the name of policies where applicable] policies.

4. Procedure

4.1 Informal stage

If you have a grievance about your employment you should discuss it informally with [insert name of position or committee]. The [insert name of position or committee] will give a response within five working days. (See Notes 1–3 below for exceptions to this procedure.)

4.2 Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to the Chairman of the Council. The Chairman shall report your written grievance to a Grievance Panel meeting, held in the absence of the public and the press. You will receive a reply within five working days follow this, and a meeting will be arranged. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. You, any relevant witnesses and members of the Grievance

Panel will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a colleague, lay or trade union official. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated or to give the members of the Grievance Panel time to consider the decision. The members of the Grievance Panel will give a response in writing within five working days of the meeting and will inform you of the appeals procedure.

4.3 Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the members of the Grievance Panel's response, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Council's Appeal Panel within five working days. A meeting will be arranged, constituted as in Stage 1, except that members of the Appeal Panel will replace members of the Grievance Panel. The members of the Appeal Panel will give a response within five working days of the meeting. The Appeal Panel's decision is final.

4.4 Investigations

The Council is committed to ensuring that all grievances are investigated fully. This may involve carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and managers, as well as analysing written records and information. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

5. Notes

1. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of a manager during the course of a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with a senior manager. The disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period if necessary until the grievance can be considered.
2. Employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from doing so.
3. The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Where there are good reasons, e.g. the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.
4. The Council reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure.
5. For employees during their first year of employment, the Council reserves the right to speed up the decision making process and may choose to follow a shortened version of the above procedure.
6. A copy of the written grievance and written decisions made will be placed on the employee's/ex-employee's personnel file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.

6. Abuse of this policy

Any abuse in the application of this policy e.g. if an employees grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with in accordance with The Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

7. Alterations and amendments to this policy

This policy and procedure does not form part of employees' contractual rights. The Council reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy and procedure from time to time or withdraw it at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the council.

8. Additional information

For further information, please contact the Parish Clerk or Staffing Committee, c/o the Chair.