

Hanborough Parish Council

Sexual and General Harassment Policy & Procedure

Aligned with NALC style policies

Adopted: 9 June 2026

Review Date: June 2028

1. Introduction

Hanborough Parish Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for its councillors, employees and anyone who comes into contact with the Council.

This policy aligns with the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and supports the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

Harassment, bullying, sexual harassment and victimisation will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Parish Councillors
- The Clerk (and any future employees)
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the Council
- Interactions with members of the public, contractors and visitors

It covers behaviour:

- At council meetings
- During council business
- At council-related events
- In written, verbal or online communications connected to council business

3. Definitions

3.1 Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

3.2 Bullying

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power, which undermines or injures the recipient.

3.3 Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to such conduct.

3.4 Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint under this policy.

4. Standards of Behaviour

All councillors and the Clerk are expected to:

- Treat others with courtesy and respect
- Promote equality and inclusion
- Not engage in any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where it is safe to do so

Councillors are reminded that breaches of this policy may also constitute a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and may be referred to the Monitoring Officer of the principal authority.

5. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Offensive or inappropriate jokes, remarks or gestures
- Personal insults or name-calling
- Excluding individuals from discussions or decisions
- Undermining or dismissing contributions
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Sexual comments, suggestions or advances
- Displaying or sharing offensive or explicit material
- Abuse of position or authority

6. Third-Party Harassment

The Council will not tolerate harassment from members of the public, contractors or visitors. Where such behaviour occurs, the Council may take appropriate action, including:

- Issuing warnings
- Restricting contact or access to meetings or facilities
- Reporting matters to the police where necessary

7. Reporting Concerns

7.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns may be raised informally by:

- Speaking directly to the individual concerned, or
- Raising the matter with the Clerk or Chair

Given the size of the Council, informal resolution may not always be appropriate.

7.2 Formal Complaints

Formal complaints should be made in writing to:

- The Clerk, or
- The Chair (if the complaint involves the Clerk)

If the complaint concerns a councillor, it may also be referred to the Monitoring Officer at the principal authority in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

The complaint should include:

- Details of the alleged behaviour
- Dates and times
- Names of those involved
- Any witnesses

- Any supporting evidence

8. Handling Complaints

Due to the small size of the Council:

- The complaint will be considered by councillors with no prior involvement
- External advice may be sought where appropriate (e.g. Monitoring Officer or HR support)
- The process will be handled promptly, fairly and confidentially

Possible outcomes include:

- Informal resolution or mediation
- Formal action under the Code of Conduct (for councillors)
- Disciplinary action (for employees)
- Referral to external authorities where appropriate

9. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially, as far as reasonably practicable. All parties are expected to maintain confidentiality during and after any investigation.

10. Protection from Victimisation

No person will be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern under this policy. Any act of victimisation will be treated as a serious matter.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required.