

# PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

## Barnwell Parish Council

### **Introduction**

Barnwell Parish Council is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

### **Definition**

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favours
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually explicit materials

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers and elected officers associated with Barnwell Parish Council (referred to as 'employees' for the purpose of this policy).

### **Prohibited Conduct**

Sexual harassment in any form is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making sexual propositions, innuendos, or suggestive comments
- Physical contact of a sexual nature without consent
- Sending sexually explicit messages or materials
- Creating a hostile or offensive work environment based on gender or sexual orientation.

### **Reporting Procedure**

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately to the Chair of the Parish Council. In the event of the Chair being unavailable, or involved in the alleged incident, the report should be made to a trusted Councillor. Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment is strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action.

### **Investigation Procedure**

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Barnwell Parish Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chair of the Parish Council or in the event of the Chair being unavailable, or involved in the alleged incident, conducted by a Councillor appointed to carry out the investigation. The Chair, or appointed Councillor, will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

**Disciplinary Action**

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken depending on the severity of the offence and the circumstances involved.

**Training and Awareness**

Barnwell Parish Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment through education and training. All employees will receive training on this policy and their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual harassment prevention and reporting.

**Compliance**

All employees are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

**Review and Revision**

The effectiveness of our Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

**Conclusion**

Barnwell Parish Council is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. The Council takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.

Anyone who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Chairman of Barnwell Parish Council. All complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of Barnwell Parish Council and has been approved at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and will be reviewed annually.