

To all Members of the HR Committee of Hughenden Parish Council
You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting to be held on 7th June 2023
6pm in the Hughenden Parish Council Office

Cllrs: U. Prashar, D. Main, J. Armshaw, and G. Cadwallader

Signed: Alice Fisher

Date: 1st June 2023

Meeting agenda & supporting documents may be viewed on the parish council website (see link below) or be emailed to you following your request to the Clerk.

<https://www.hughenden-pc.gov.uk/council-info/minutes-and-agendas/>

Should you require further information or assistance in joining this meeting, please call 01494 715296 or by email to clerk@hughendenpc.org.uk.

The Chair may, at his/her discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of business, adjourn the meeting to allow any members of the public to address the meeting. Parishioners and others in attendance are reminded that they must remain silent during the transaction of Council business.

AGENDA

1. Public Participation

Members of the public are permitted by the Chair to speak once in respect of business itemised on the agenda for no more than 2 minutes. The period for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest and dispensation requests

In accordance with Sections 30 (3) and 235 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 and Hughenden Parish Council Code of Conduct, Councillors are requested to disclose personal and prejudicial interests on matters to be considered at the meeting.

4. Recruitment

To discuss the need to employ a permanent Deputy Clerk / Parish Warden with revised job description (Appendix A) and to discuss the need to employ a permanent Burials / Allotments Administrator (Appendix B)

5. Agree priorities of the HR Committee to include:

- HR Compliance: Employment policies and procedures (Appendix C)
- Complaints Procedure (Appendix D)

6. Date of next meetings

To agree the following dates:

6pm, 4th July 2023

6pm, 5th September 2023

6pm, 7th November 2023

7. Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve to exclude the Press and Public from the following item, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

8. Staffing Matters

- To consider a confidential oral report from the Committee Chair
- To consider a report from the temporary Burials Officer

Appendix A



Hughenden Parish Council is seeking committed applicants to join this ambitious team, working at the heart of the Parish Council, and having specific responsibility for the delivery of parishioner facing services as well as providing support for the Clerk.

You will be working within a passionate, positive, and flexible environment with a young, re-energised team. The Council currently consists of 10 helpful Councillors with varied talents, all working towards the goal of making Hughenden Parish an improved environment for all residents.

The Parish is facing considerable challenges regarding infrastructure pressures and management of the environment. These will provide opportunities for the Parish Council to improve its open spaces, amenities, and services to the community.

We are seeking to appoint a Deputy Clerk / Parish Custodian who can be proactive, innovative, and inclusive in decision making.

The postholder will ideally have previous experience of local government. The Council is committed to training and will develop a training program to support the successful candidate. Additional support will be provided for the postholder to undertake a Certificate in Local Council Administration (ILCA) within 18 months of commencing employment with the Council.

For a full recruitment pack, application form, or an informal chat please call Alice Fisher, 07739 464691 or e-mail clerk@hughenden-pc.gov.uk or visit our website www.hughendenpc.gov.uk

Post Title: Deputy Clerk / Parish Custodian

Location: Hybrid Role between Hughenden Parish Council Office & Hughenden Parish

Responsible to: Clerk

Hours: Permanent- Part Time, 22.5 hours per week to be worked flexibly by agreement

Salary: SCP 19 (£14.48 per hour) to SCP 21 (£15.02 per hour) depending on experience, pro rata

JOB PURPOSE

To assist the Clerk to the Council in the execution of all Council business and to meet the Parish Council's statutory requirements. To deputise for the Clerk during her absence.



REQUIRED SKILLS

- Good general standard of education and numeracy
- Knowledge of Local Government procedure or willingness to learn.
- A good standard of IT literacy (knowledge of Microsoft 365 Suite and Xero Accounting would be advantageous)
- Ability to communicate with other staff, Councillors, and the public.
- Ability to be self-motivated and work with minimum supervision.
- To have a flexible approach to hours of work and day to day duties and responsibilities
- Be mobile and willing to travel around the Parish.

MAIN TASKS/JOB ACTIVITIES

- To support the Parish Clerk in ensuring the smooth running of the Parish Council administration
- To assist the Clerk in maintaining the Council's finances on a day-to-day basis and carry out monthly reconciliations of payments and receipts against the Council's bank statements.
- To prepare list of payments of invoices for the Council's approval and to enable the Clerk to arrange BACS transfers/cheque payments.
- To prepare detailed analyses of each Committee's expenditure/receipt
- To produce quarterly claims for re-imburement of VAT payments
- To assist Clerk to ensure Council's asset register is updated regularly.
- To assist the Clerk in preparing agendas, reports, and associated documents to support Committee Meetings and produce accurate draft minutes.
- To Clerk the Environment & Services Committee
- To deputise for the Clerk at other Council meetings, when required
- To take appropriate actions to implement Council resolutions.
- To assist the Burials and Allotments Administrator as needed.
- Ensuring receipts (cash and cheques) are banked weekly.
- To handle effectively queries from the public.
- To demonstrate a willingness to undertake ILCA and other training courses as appropriate.
- To deal with assigned incoming mail and maintain appropriate records.
- To liaise with voluntary groups, other local Councils, SGC and government departments/agencies as appropriate
- To undertake any other reasonable tasks as directed by the Clerk to the Council or the Parish Council.
- Updating all council noticeboards as required.



Parish Custodian Key Duties and Responsibilities – to be shared with the Clerk.

- Support contracted consultants to design, develop and manage the delivery of site management plans for the approximately twenty plots of the Parish-owned land in the area.
- To deliver effective community engagement so that resident aspirations and the Council's vision and policies are embedded in site management plans. Encourage wider participation in greenspace and community projects, including working with volunteers.
- To support the Clerk by engaging with third party contractors providing the maintenance and servicing of Parish Council land and assets.
- To provide day-to-day monitoring of recreation and sports grounds, greenspaces and allotments, including grounds maintenance monitoring, carrying out minor works under the direction of the Clerk, and providing advice and support.
- To support the Clerk to ensure the completion of annual/periodic maintenance inspections and condition surveys for all Parish assets.
- To work occasional evenings and weekends, including attending Council meetings. The coordination, response, and delivery to out of hours estates issues.
- To work in collaboration with community and sports groups, community facility users and allotment tenants to deliver high-quality support.
- Ensure policy and procedures are followed and relevant training is undertaken. Ensure that information is shared with the Clerk.
- To write and present reports to the Council, its committees and other organisations as required, including reports such as a biodiversity audit and action plan, a parish map, and a community engagement plan.
- To monitor facilities, vehicles, plant, and equipment to ensure safe working practices and compliance with health and safety regulations, regular maintenance and to maintain the correct reporting/maintenance systems.
- Any other tasks that may be reasonably required in pursuit of Council objectives.

This job description sets out the main duties of the job as of May 2023. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibilities entailed.

Appendix B



Hughenden Parish Council is seeking committed applicants to join this ambitious team, working at the heart of the Parish Council.

You will be working within a passionate, positive, and flexible environment with a young, re-energised team. The Council currently consists of 10 helpful Councillors with varied talents, all working towards the goal of making Hughenden Parish an improved environment for all residents.

The Parish is facing considerable challenges regarding infrastructure pressures and management of the environment. These will provide opportunities for the Parish Council to improve its open spaces, amenities, and services to the community.

We are seeking to appoint a Burials & Allotments Administrator who can be proactive, innovative, and inclusive in decision making.

The postholder will ideally have previous experience of local government, allotment management and burial ground administration.

For a full recruitment pack, application form, or an informal chat please call Alice Fisher, 07739 464691 or e-mail clerk@hughenden-pc.gov.uk or visit our website www.hughendenpc.gov.uk

Post Title: Burials & Allotments Administrator

Location: Hybrid Role between Hughenden Parish Council Office & Hughenden Parish

Responsible to: Clerk

Hours: Permanent- Part Time, 15 hours per week

Salary: SCP 17 (£13.95 per hour)

JOB PURPOSE

The post holder will provide a comprehensive range of clerical and administrative duties to ensure the Parish Council successfully fulfils its role as a burial authority and allotment provider. In addition, they will work as part of the team, supporting the Clerk and Deputy Clerk with the overall administrative function of the Council.



REQUIRED SKILLS

- Good general standard of education and numeracy
- A good standard of IT literacy (knowledge of Outlook, Microsoft Word, Excel, Sage Accounting, WordPress would be advantageous)
- Ability to communicate with other staff, Councillors, and the public.
- Ability to be self-motivated and work with minimum supervision.
- To have a flexible approach to hours of work and day to day duties and responsibilities
- Be mobile and willing to travel around the Parish.

BURIALS MAIN TASKS/JOB ACTIVITIES

To actively manage, monitor, administer and develop the Council's Burials Service.

To be the first point of contact for funeral directors, members of the public (relating to burial enquiries) and stonemasons. The applicant will also be responsible for liaising with officiants, maintaining the statutory Burial Records and for ensuring that the Parish Council's Burial Ground Policy is fully implemented.

- To intake burial enquiries from members of the public and funeral directors and make bookings as appropriate
- To manage the burials diary and to ensure that Clerk / Proper Officer is kept informed of requirements to attend internments.
- To liaise with funeral directors and grave diggers as needed.
- To manage burial paperwork including invoices, statements, burial register, master register, exclusive rights of burials and register of grave space.
- Keep up to date with burials legislation and ensure Council burials policies and procedures are updated regularly with approval of Full Council.
- Update the Book of Remembrance as required.
- Inspect the Garden of Rest as required and report back to the Clerk.
- Communicate all bookings with grounds maintenance contractors to ensure no works are to happen during funerals.
- To deal with the sensitive nature of the job and maintain a high level of empathy and understanding.
- Willingness to attend training to keep up to date with current legislation.



ALLOTMENTS MAIN TASKS/JOB ACTIVITIES

To actively manage, monitor, administer and develop the Council's Allotments Service.

- To promote, develop and represent the Council's Allotment Service.
- Manage the allotment waiting list.
- To be responsible for dealing effectively with all customer enquiries by telephone, email, letter and in person.
- Actively provide advice and support to allotment tenants, allotment associations and site representatives on allotment procedures and rules.
- Working with the Clerk & Deputy Clerk to update tenancy agreements in line with current legislation as and when maybe required.
- To manage and make appropriate decisions on all allotment tenancies and terminations under the guidance of the Clerk.
- To inspect and maintain plot quality standards.
- Investigating and responding to complaints and disputes to provide advice, mediation, and corrective action under the guidance of the Clerk.
- Develop opportunities for special projects and innovative ways of enabling all members of the community to manage an allotment working closely with volunteer groups.
- Maintain electronic records/databases including GIS mapping.
- To manage allotment administration, working with Finance Committee to issue invoices and chasing non-payers.
- Conduct site surveys and inspections to present to Environment & Services Committee
- Assist in the management of health and safety issues.
- To keep up to date with allotment legislation.
- To manage the allotment budget under guidance of the Finance Committee

This job description sets out the main duties of the job as of May 2023. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibilities entailed.

Appendix C



HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Please take the time to read through this employee handbook. It covers all the general information you need to start your employee journey with us. It should be read in conjunction with your offer letter and contract of employment as these detail your personal terms.

Please return this page

Please complete and return this form to your line manager

I acknowledge receipt of the Employee Handbook issued by Hughenden Parish Council.

I understand and accept its contents and acknowledge that Hughenden Parish Council may revise these from time to time.

Signature _____

Date _____

Name _____

Job Title _____

Department _____

INTRODUCTION

Please take the time to read through this employee handbook. It covers all the general information you need to start your employee journey with us. It should be read in conjunction with your offer letter and contract of employment as these detail your personal terms.

Your Copy

Please complete and retain this copy

I acknowledge receipt of the Employee Handbook issued by Hughenden Parish Council.

I understand and accept its contents and acknowledge that Hughenden Parish Council may revise these from time to time.

Signature _____

Date _____

Name _____

Job Title _____

Department _____

WELCOME

Starting in a new organisation can be both exciting and daunting. This Employee Handbook is to help you understand Hughenden Parish Council's vision and aims, together with our expectations of you and what you should expect from us.

OUR VISION & VALUE

“The Council will work with its community and other Partners to help shape Hughenden Parish as a safe, pleasant and attractive place to live and work”

GETTING STARTED

INDUCTION

You will receive a comprehensive induction upon joining Hughenden Parish Council. This will enable you to learn more about Hughenden Parish Council and your role within it. During your induction the following will be covered

- formally welcome you
- talk about the way we do things
- explain what you can expect at work
- talk through the ways in which you will be expected to contribute to your work and team
- go through our training programme (where applicable)
- explain Hughenden Parish Council Operating Procedure
- review your Contract of Employment
- explain the need to obtain your identification documents and payroll details
- discuss Health and Safety
- explain the fire drill

PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE

All positions are subject to a probationary period of not less than 13 weeks. During your probationary period you must demonstrate suitability for the role to which you have been appointed if your probationary period is to be successful. Your line manager will oversee your performance and help you to overcome any difficulties. At the end of the probationary period your line manager will carry out a formal evaluation of your performance.

Hughenden Parish Council reserves the right to extend your probationary period. If you do not achieve the required standards, Hughenden Parish Council may terminate your employment. The successful completion of your probationary period and appointment as a permanent employee will be confirmed in writing.

Any capability and conduct issues within the first 12 months will be managed through the probationary procedure and meetings held in accordance with it.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Following your verbal offer of employment you will have been issued with your Statement of Principal Terms and Conditions of Employment; this is a legal document, which states the terms that you agree to follow whilst you are working in Hughenden Parish Council. It is your responsibility to read them carefully before you sign them. If you should have any queries, please do speak to your line manager. Your line manager will sign the document on behalf of Hughenden Parish Council.

JOB DESCRIPTION

You will have received a job description during your recruitment and offer process; it forms part of your Contract of Employment and ensures that you know what is expected of you so there will be no misunderstandings in the future. However, it may be subject to alteration as it is designed to be a guide to the overall activities required of the job so as time goes on, your job will naturally change and your job description will need to be updated. We will ensure that you receive training for your job role and you are encouraged to seek further training. Any changes to job title which may arise as you progress within Hughenden Parish Council, or for any other reason, will be notified to you.

REFERENCES

NEW EMPLOYEES

As part of the recruitment process you will be asked to provide details for past employers who we may contact to obtain a reference. Your employment is conditional on Hughenden Parish Council receiving at least two references. Should the references received cause concern your line manager will meet with you to discuss. Under certain circumstances and if the data confirmed in the references does not match that stated by you during the recruitment process this may lead to your employment being terminated.

POST EMPLOYMENT

All post-employment reference requests should be addressed to the Clerk of the Council. They will then provide a formal company reference that will meet its obligations to be fair and accurate.

References will normally, but not exclusively, give the employee's position held at the time of leaving and the dates of employment.

BENEFITS AND LEAVE

Hughenden Parish Council prides itself on supporting and rewarding employees.

HOLIDAY

Your holiday entitlement is as detailed in your contract of employment. Your annual leave is accrued for each full month worked.

All holiday must be requested and approved by your line manager. It is advisable to agree your holiday time well in advance, as in some cases it may be necessary to restrict the number of people on holiday for operational reasons. Whilst every effort will be made to meet your request, your line manager does have the right to refuse your request if operational reasons require you to work.

If you change the number of hours you work during your employment with Hughenden Parish Council, your holiday entitlement will be recalculated. Full details of your new entitlement will be provided by your line manager.

PENSION

We operate a contributory pension scheme into which you will be auto-enrolled (subject to the conditions of the scheme). The scheme enables you to save for your retirement. Further details are available separately from the Finance Department.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

You will be entitled to take paid time off in the event of a death of a family member, i.e., a parent, spouse, partner, child, sibling, mother-in-law, father-in-law or grandparent.

Additional time-off may be granted in exceptional circumstances at management discretion.

If you need to attend the funeral of someone who is not a family member, you may request annual leave, in line with the annual leave procedure.

MATERNITY RIGHTS

If you become pregnant, you should inform your manager as soon as possible, and provide a doctor's/midwife's Statement, indicating the expected date of confinement (MAT B1 Form).

You have the right to paid time off to attend antenatal appointments arranged by your GP, registered Midwife or Health Visitor. Your manager may ask you to produce your appointment card.

If your doctor advises you that any part of your work is dangerous for you or your unborn child, you should let your manager know immediately. Maternity pay and leave will be granted in accordance with an individual's statutory rights. The right to return to work will be subject to compliance with the statutory conditions and requirements.

We will carry out a risk assessment to assess any workplace risks for women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. Your line manager will identify the risks and any hazards that are exposed and take action to mitigate the risks.

For further detailed information on maternity rights please speak to your line manager.

ADOPTION RIGHTS

You will be entitled to statutory adoption leave if you meet the eligibility criteria. You must be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency. Please speak to your line manager for more information.

PATERNITY RIGHTS

If your wife, partner or civil partner gives birth or adopts a child, you may be entitled to Paternity Leave. Please speak to your line manager to check your eligibility.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

Shared Parental Leave enables parents to share the maternity leave period. This can be taken as long as the eligibility criteria are met. For further information should you wish to take this leave please speak to your line manager

PARENTAL LEAVE

Once you have completed one year's continuous service with Hughenden Parish Council you are entitled to take 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave. Should you wish to take advantage of this leave please speak to your line manager who can obtain further details for you.

FAMILY EMERGENCY

If you have a family emergency involving a dependant and you need to take time off, you must notify your line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable of your absence and its anticipated duration.

Under normal circumstances you will be entitled to take no more than one day paid leave to deal with an immediate problem and make any longer-term arrangements. If additional time is needed and can be supported by Hughenden Parish Council, you may request to take annual leave, but this must be authorised by your line manager in advance of taking additional time off.

Definitions of "dependant"

- Spouse or partner
- Child
- Parent or someone who lives with you as part of your family
- Someone who is dependent on you, as a primary carer, but who is not your employee, tenant, lodger or boarder

Examples of emergency situations

- If a dependant falls ill, where this is an emergency and does not involve care for an extended illness
- A dependant gives birth
- Death of a dependant
- Unexpected interruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant
- Unexpected incident involving your child during school hours

This does not cover domestic incidents such as dealing with a broken boiler or taking a pet to the vet, absence for which would be treated as annual leave.

JURY SERVICE AND OTHER PUBLIC DUTIES

You are also entitled to request time off work for the following specified public duties:

- Justice of the Peace
- Members of a Local Authority (i.e. Local Councillors)
- Members of a Statutory Tribunal
- Members of a Police Authority
- Members of health bodies (i.e. NHS Trusts, Health Authorities and Health Boards)
- Members of education bodies (i.e. managing or governing bodies of local authority educational establishments, grant maintained schools, school councils, self-governing schools, colleges of further education, central institutions)
- Members of the Environmental Agency.

Please discuss these situations at the earliest opportunity with your line manager. Where available, supporting documentary evidence should be supplied. Your line manager will consider your request with regard to your eligibility, the relevance of the request and the needs of Hughenden Parish Council. If you wish to dispute the Manager's decision, Hughenden Parish Council's formal grievance procedure should be used.

If you are called for Jury Service, you are entitled to take time off work but should claim juror's expenses from the court. Your full time pay will be made up by Hughenden Parish Council, upon proof of the juror's expenses claimed. If you report for jury service but are not called upon to serve on any particular day, you are expected to attend work on that day if it is reasonably practicable to do so in the time available.

Where you are called upon to give evidence in court as a witness or be a juror you should produce supporting documentation when making the absence request.

TIME OFF IN LIEU

Please see your Contract of Employment for details.

DEVELOPMENT & PROGRESSION

We are committed to working with all employees at every level to assist them with the acquisition of new skills and competencies.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are totally committed to giving each and every employee the scope and encouragement to develop their unique abilities to the full. You will be able to take advantage of on-going learning and development opportunities whichever area of Hughenden Parish Council you work in. Personal development is essential for everyone working in today's fast-moving environment and yours' is supported.

Hughenden Parish Council will provide you with every opportunity to improve your knowledge and learn your craft by providing "on the job" training in your day-to-day work. Encouragement is given to employees to take advantage of courses that will assist your advancement with Hughenden Parish Council.

MEMBERSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL BODIES

You are expected to keep up to date membership of any professional body that is a requirement of your employment with Hughenden Parish Council.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

We understand that to develop our people and communicate effectively it is necessary to review performance on a regular basis. Although this should be carried out informally on a daily basis it is still necessary to set aside specific time for this process to be carried out in a more detailed and controlled way. Employees should be reviewed at least annually but earlier at the discretion of the line manager.

The review process has been designed to support all employees in working more effectively and getting the most out of their time with the business.

The aims of the review process are:

- 1) Establish a clear link between business and individual goals
- 2) Ensure that skills and knowledge are reviewed
- 3) Generate a thorough review of development needs
- 4) Underline the link between performance and individual effectiveness.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following pages include key policies and procedures, applicable to all employees. Please note that this is not an exhaustive set of policies. From time to time all the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook are updated. Please make sure you are referring to the latest version.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

You are expected at all times to behave in a professional manner consistent with the high standards of Hughenden Parish Council and to comply with the rules, procedures and policies set out in this Handbook, your employment contract and current operational practices. Breaches of these rules, or of any terms or condition of your employment contract, may be dealt with under Hughenden Parish Council's disciplinary procedure.

Hughenden Parish Council will in no way accept any behaviour that can be considered as rude or actions that generate negative gossip towards employees, clients or members of the public. Objectionable or insulting behaviour or bad language will render you liable to disciplinary action.

You should use your best endeavours to promote the interests of Hughenden Parish Council and shall, during normal working hours, devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to Hughenden Parish Council and its affairs.

Any involvement in activities which could be constructed as being in competition with Hughenden Parish Council is not permitted.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

PRINCIPLES

We aim to be an equal opportunities employer. In all of our employment practices all employees will be treated equally, in the application of their conditions of service, recruitment, training and promotion prospects, equal opportunities regardless of sex, race, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age or religion or belief. Direct discrimination will be a breach and therefore a disciplinary offence. Indirect (often inadvertent) discrimination will be the focus of a review and changes will be made to work practices.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all permanent employees and those retained on a contract basis.

OVERVIEW

- To ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.
- The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITMENT

- To ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.
- That the policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.
- We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.
- To ensure the policy is applied consistently across the Council.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

- To act in an appropriate manner to support the application of the equal opportunities policy

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Bringing new people into our organisation is vital to us achieving our strategic objectives, therefore, the recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that anyone involved in making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.

We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.

All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered

solely on their ability to do the job.

All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other employees.

TRAINING AND PROMOTION

Line managers will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.

All internal employee moves and promotions will be in line with this policy.

MONITORING

We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring may involve:

- the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;
- the examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
- recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and employees.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

PRINCIPLES

Whilst Hughenden Parish Council does not wish to impose unreasonable rules of conduct on its employees, certain standards of behaviour are necessary to maintain good employment relations and discipline in the interest of all employees. The Disciplinary Policy aims to provide a framework for the prompt and effective resolution of instances in relation to misconduct. The procedure is designed to emphasise and encourage improvements.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all permanent employees and those retained on a contract basis. The disciplinary policy does not apply to employees with under one year's service, it is recommended that where possible this policy is used as a guide to provide a framework, In these situations will be managed through the probationary procedure. Where there is an issue of poor performance it would be dealt with under the Capability Procedure.

OVERVIEW

- All allegations of misconduct are carefully investigated
- Individuals will have an opportunity to have their say before decisions are reached
- Individuals have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings
- A range of warnings and penalties can be used to deal with misconduct
- If a warning or penalty is imposed, the individual will be informed of what improvements are required, the timescale in which improvement should be made and the consequence if the improvements are not made or sustained
- A line manager will conduct all investigations and formal meetings. A senior manager will hold potential dismissal meetings.
- There is a right of appeal against any penalty except informal action

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITMENT

- To ensure that the policy is applied consistently across the council.
- To ensure that all line managers are fully trained in handling disciplinary issues.

- To encourage and assist all employees to maintain acceptable standards of conduct.
- To ensure fair treatment of employees and deal with cases in a timely and effective manner.
- To ensure the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure is in line with current legislation.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

- To be fully aware of the conduct standards expected.
- To be aware of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and possible consequences of failing to meet the standards required.
- To discuss/inform their line manager if they have any problems in meeting the defined standards.
- Be aware of policies and procedures relevant and relating to their role.

ESTABLISH THE FACTS

When a potential disciplinary matter arises, the relevant line manager should first establish the facts promptly and where appropriate obtain written statements from any available witnesses.

A thorough investigation must be carried out to establish all the facts concerning the alleged misconduct. Wherever practicable the individual conducting the investigation should be different to the individual holding any disciplinary meeting.

SUSPENSION

Should the allegation being investigated be of a serious nature you may be suspended from work on full pay whilst the investigation is conducted. Any suspension is not considered as disciplinary action however it is to enable the investigation to be conducted whilst providing the necessary protection to the business and the employee.

INVESTIGATION

Any investigation should be dealt with promptly and gather all relevant information to enable a full and thorough investigation of the allegation(s). If there is a need for further investigation this may include the need for an investigation meeting. The investigation meeting is to gather facts only and should not result in any disciplinary action. There is no legal right for you to be accompanied at an investigation meeting. Following the conclusion of the investigation a decision will be made to establish if there is a disciplinary case to answer.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Minor faults will be dealt with informally through counselling and training. For a first offence of minor misconduct there is no need to arrange a formal meeting. The employee should be spoken to and issued with an improvement plan.

The plan should cover:

- Key areas of concern
- Specific examples
- Implications of the concern
- Improvement require including timeframe
- Training and Support to enable improvement

The Improvement Plan should be signed by you as a commitment to improve to the required conduct standard.

ARRANGE A FORMAL MEETING

If following the investigation, it is decided that the allegation is either a further breach or of a serious nature a disciplinary meeting will be arranged. You will be notified in writing of the requirement to attend a formal meeting. The letter will provide you with at least 24 hours' notice of the meeting and will contain the following information:

- Time and venue of meeting
- Specific details about the allegation(s)
- Advise the employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a Trade Union Representative
- Who will be attending the meeting
- Copy of details obtained in the investigation
- You should consider your responses and prepare for the meeting.

DISCIPLINARY MEETING

You and your companion should make every effort to attend the meeting. At the meeting the disciplinary manager will explain the allegation and go through the evidence from the investigation. You will be given opportunity to set out your case, respond to the allegation(s), ask questions, review the investigation, present evidence and call relevant witnesses. If witnesses are to be called advance notice must be given. The meeting will be adjourned to consider the evidence and the discussion that has taken place and a decision will be made as to the appropriate outcome. This does not always mean that a disciplinary sanction will be issued. Where a disciplinary sanction is put in place details of the required level of conduct will be explained and an offer to provide training to ensure the maintenance of the required standard. All disciplinary meeting outcomes will be confirmed in writing and a copy retained on your personnel file.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

There are a range of disciplinary sanctions that can be considered. All warnings are 'live' for a set period of time and subject to satisfactory conduct the warning will become spent following the expiry of the period.

Sanctions that can be issued:

Stage 1 - Written Warning this would remain in force for a specific period of time of at least 6 months

Stage 2 - Final Written Warning this would remain in force for a specific period of time of at least 12 months

Stage 3 - Dismissal is considered in circumstances where repeated misconduct and escalation through the disciplinary stages or gross misconduct whereby it would be a first occurrence. It may be appropriate, in cases of severity, for Hughenden Parish Council not to follow all or any stages. Dismissal may be with or without notice depending on the circumstances and may occur whether or not warnings have been issued.

In cases of serious misconduct, you may receive a final written warning as a first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

Remedies Short of Dismissal In exceptional cases and at the absolute discretion of Hughenden Parish Council, action including transfer, temporary demotion, permanent demotion or temporary suspension without pay may be considered as an alternative to dismissal. At any time, the application of the above process may be departed from in full or in part, at Hughenden Parish Council's absolute discretion and disciplinary action, including dismissal, taken without recourse to this Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

GROUNDINGS FOR DISCIPLINARY

Matters which may justify invoking the disciplinary procedure but which do not amount to gross misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Refusal to carry out a reasonable management request
- Unauthorised absence, or persistent absence
- Poor timekeeping and attendance
- Failure to adhere to the absence reporting procedure
- Unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property
- Failure to report damage to company property or premises
- Unreasonable disruption of the work of others
- Breach of company policies and practices
- Failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to the Council and its affairs during normal working hours

- Incorrect submission or late submission of expenses
- Harassment or bullying (not deemed serious enough for gross misconduct)
- Breaches of our Equal Opportunities Policy (not deemed serious enough for gross misconduct)

GROSS MISCONDUCT

Acts of gross misconduct are considered so serious that they warrant 'summary dismissal'. If you are summarily dismissed your employment will end immediately and you will not receive notice of payment in lieu of notice.

Some examples of gross misconduct are listed below, but not limited to, to give an indication of the types of offence, which would lead to your immediate dismissal:

- Theft, fraud or dishonesty directly or indirectly affecting the Council, it's suppliers or customers
- Physical violence on other persons in the course of the Council's business and/or intimidation by aggressive behaviour or language
- Serious insubordination or rudeness to colleagues, customers or suppliers
- Repeated bullying or harassment of fellow employees
- Breach of confidentiality
- Incapacity for work due to the influence of alcohol or illegal substances
- Being under the influence of, or possessing, alcohol or illegal substances during employment hours (unless you have been authorised to, and have been, entertaining clients, in which case a reasonable amount of alcohol consumption is permitted)
- Deliberate wilful damage to Council or other employees property
- Gross insubordination
- Falsification of claims or records, or giving false information to obtain employment or an employment-related benefit, including expenses
- Flagrant disregard for safety/hygiene regulations likely to endanger the individual concerned or other people, or to cause a breach of statutory regulations
- Bringing the Council into disrepute
- Acceptance of gifts & hospitality in contravention of the bribery Act 2010
- Misuse of internet access or email systems
- Unauthorised possession and/or use of Council's computer equipment, telecommunications equipment or software

- Action or behaviour at work which is, or may be, injurious to the health and safety of others
- Serious or persistent breach of Company Equal Opportunities policy
- Any breaches of confidentiality requirements in your contract of employment other than minor breaches
- Harassment or bullying, other than minor breaches

In the most serious cases of gross misconduct, it is possible that we will dismiss you immediately without going through a formal suspension and investigation procedure. If this happens you will receive written confirmation within seven days, setting out the misconduct which led to your dismissal and what the basis was for the decision. You will then have the right to appeal.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

You have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary sanction. To exercise your right to appeal you must set out the grounds of your appeal in writing as soon as practicable after you have been informed of the decision and within five days of receiving the written decision, clearly stating your grounds for appeal. The outcome letter will indicate who the appeal should be addressed to.

We will invite you to an appeal hearing and remind you of your right to be accompanied.

The appeal hearing will reconsider the original decision. You will have an opportunity to put forward, should you wish to do so:

- New evidence, which was not available during the first meeting; and or
- Complaints of a flaw in the original decision-making process, such as a failure to follow procedures or a failure to give you a fair hearing.

The outcome of an appeal hearing will be confirmed in writing. The outcomes of an appeal hearing can take many forms including

- The original outcome is upheld
- The original outcome is overturned and
 - No disciplinary sanction is issued
 - A less severe disciplinary sanction is issued
 - A higher disciplinary sanction is issued
 - Some other action is informed e.g. demotion

The decision from an appeal will be final and there is no further right of appeal

DISMISSAL FOR OTHER REASONS

The Council may, for reasons unconnected with your conduct or performance, become aware of circumstances that require it to consider the termination of your employment. Examples of where this might be the case include:

- Where the Parish Council discovered that you no longer have the right to working in the United Kingdom
- Where you have been convicted of a criminal offence that may have bearing on your employment

ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

You have a statutory right to be accompanied to the formal disciplinary meeting. This may be an employee of the business, or an official employed by a trade union. A Trade Union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany an employee. The role of the companion is to support the employee. They may address the meeting to sum up the case, respond on behalf of you to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the meeting. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on your behalf, address the meeting against your wishes, prevent you from speaking or generally disrupt the proceeding of the meeting.

NONE ATTENDANCE

You must make every effort to attend all formal meetings. The meeting will only be rearranged once. If you are persistently unable or unwilling to attend a disciplinary meeting without good cause the disciplinary manager will make a decision based upon the evidence available.

CAPABILITY POLICY

PRINCIPLES

The purpose of the Capability Procedure is to outline a recognised and consistent system to maintain satisfactory performance standards and to encourage improved performance when you are not performing to the required standards of your role. The aim of the policy is to support on-going improvement in your performance or capability.

Hughenden Parish Council recognises the difference between a deliberate or careless failure on the part of an employee to perform to the standards of which he or she is capable (in which case Hughenden Parish Council will use the disciplinary procedure) and a case of incapability, where the employee is lacking in knowledge, skill or ability and so cannot perform to the standard required (in which case Hughenden Parish Council will use this capability procedure in an attempt to improve the employee's performance)

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all permanent employees and those retained on a contract basis. The capability policy does not apply to employees with under one year's service, it is recommended that where possible this policy is used as a guide to provide a framework, In these situations will be managed through the probationary procedure. Where there is an issue of misconduct it would be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

OVERVIEW

- Regular performance review will take place outside of this procedure
- Capability/Poor performance gaps will be addressed through an improvement plan
- An improvement plan will have a minimum 20-day improvement target
- Individuals will have opportunity to have their say before decisions are reached
- Individuals have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings
- a range of warnings and penalties can be used to deal with capability
- If a warning or penalty is imposed, the individual will be informed of what improvements are required, the timescale in which improvement should be made and the consequence if the improvements are not made or sustained
- All formal meeting will be conducted by a line manager. Potential dismissal meetings will be held by a senior manager or suitable appointed manager.
- There is a right of appeal against any penalty except informal action

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITMENT

- To ensure that the policy is applied consistently across the business

- To ensure that all line managers are fully trained in capability management
- To ensure that all employees are provided with the necessary training and guidance to enable them to achieve the required performance level
- To explore all day to day management interventions and assistance prior to starting a formal process
- To have regular discussions with all employees regarding their expected level of performance and their performance in line with these
- To ensure the Capability Policy and Procedure is in line with current legislation.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

- To fully understand the requirements of their role and performance standards
- To seek assistance if they do not understand or are unable to perform a requirement
- To make every effort to ensure their capability meets required levels
- To be aware of the Capability Policy and Procedure and possible consequences of falling to meet the standards required
- To receive any feedback in a positive manner and view it as an aid to support improvement

TRIGGERS FOR CAPABILITY

Capability concerns may be due to poor performance, lack of capability, or where it is apparent you are not coping adequately with issues such as pressures of the job, or volume of work.

This can be because:

- There is a gap between your skills and the required performance level and the performance is at an unacceptable standard. Poor standards of work, repeated errors, non-achievement of targets and objectives, failure to achieve regular tasks required in the role.
- You are no longer capable to perform your contractual role due to ill health.

ADDRESSING CAPABILITY

For a minor capability issue there is no need to arrange a formal meeting. The employee should be spoken to and issued with an improvement plan.

The plan should cover:

- Key areas of concern
- Specific examples

- Implications of the concern
- Improvement require including timeframe
- Training and support to enable improvement

The Improvement Plan should be signed by you as a commitment to improve to the required performance standards.

However, in cases where informal improvement plans and discussions with the employee does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in performance, or where the performance issues are more serious, the following capability procedure will be used.

CAPABILITY SANCTIONS

If the outcome is that a capability sanction is in forced it will be 'live' for a set period of time and subject to satisfactory performance the warning will become spent following the expiry of the period.

- **Stage one** - likely outcome is a Performance Warning this would remain in force for a specific period of time of at least 6 months
- **Stage two** - likely outcome is a Final Performance Warning this would remain in force for a specific period of time of at least 12 months
- **Stage three** - likely outcome is Dismissal is considered in circumstances where repeated poor performance and escalation through the capability stages. Dismissal may be with notice and depending on the circumstances, you may not be required to work your notice period and will be paid in lieu of notice.
- **Remedies Short of Dismissal** - In exceptional cases and at the absolute discretion of the Council, action including transfer or demotion may be considered as an alternative to dismissal.

At any stage Hughenden Parish Council may consider transferring you to alternate work, if there is work available. If your level of performance has a serious or substantial effect on the Council or reputation, you will be issued a final warning that you will be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.

STAGE ONE - FORMAL REVIEW

If you do not achieve the expectations as agreed in the improvement plan you will be invited to attend a formal capability meeting. You will receive at least 24 hours' notice of your requirement to attend a meeting. The letter will detail who will be attending the meeting, your performance against the set objective and your right to be accompanied.

At this meeting the following will be discussed:

- The objectives for improvement set in the Improvement Plan
- Review your performance over the objective period
- Review if all support offered has been put in place and received
- Review your achievement against the objectives

The outcome of the meeting can be one of the following:

- Removal from objectives if sufficient improvement has been made
- Extend the Improvement Plan for a defined period of time
- Issue a capability sanction

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing, include the performance objective with an objective period time scale and also detail the right of appeal.

STAGE TWO - SECOND FORMAL REVIEW

You will be invited to a formal review meeting at the end of the objective period. In certain circumstances where your performance is deemed to be unachievable within the timeframe and the continuation of the objective period has the potential to be unduly pressurised the meeting may be held earlier. You will receive at least 24 hours' notice of your requirement to attend a meeting and you may be accompanied.

At this meeting the following will be discussed:

- The objectives for improvement set in the stage one meeting
- Review your performance over the objective period
- Review if all support offered has been put in place and received
- Review your achievement against the objectives

The outcome of the meeting can be one of the following:

- Removal from objectives if the objective has been fully achieved
- Where there has been an improvement but not 100% achievement the objective period may be extended for a defined period of time and the capability sanction reissued
- Issue the next level of capability sanction

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing, include the performance objective with an objective period time scale and also detail the right of appeal. It will also explain that should your performance not reach the required level that the next stage could result in dismissal.

STAGE THREE - THIRD FORMAL REVIEW

The same as at stage two, you will be invited to a formal review meeting at the end of the objective period, in certain circumstances where your performance is deemed to be

unachievable within the timeframe and the continuation of the objective period has the potential to be unduly pressurised the meeting may be held earlier. You will receive at least 24 hours' notice of your requirement to attend a meeting and you may be accompanied.

At this meeting the following will be discussed:

- The objectives for improvement set in the stage one meeting
- Review your performance over the objective period
- Review if all support offered has been put in place and received
- Review your achievement against the objectives

The outcome of the meeting can be one of the following:

- Removal from objectives if sufficient improvement has been made
- Extended the Improvement Plan for a defined period of time
- Employment terminated

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing, include the performance objective with an objective period time scale and also detail the right of appeal.

LONG TERM CAPABILITY – ILL HEALTH

Personal circumstances and health issues may arise which do not prevent you from attending for work, but which prevent you from carrying out your normal duties (e.g. a lack of dexterity or general ill health). If such a situation arises, we will normally need to have details of your medical diagnosis and prognosis so that we have the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances this can be most easily obtained by asking your own doctor for a medical report. Your permission is needed before we can obtain such a report and we will expect you to co-operate in this matter should the need arise. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

There may also be personal circumstances which prevent you from attending work, either for a prolonged period(s) or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances we will need to know when we can expect your attendance record to reach an acceptable level. This may again mean asking your own doctor for a medical report or by making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition, and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

You have the right to appeal against any formal capability sanction. To exercise your right to appeal you must set out the grounds of your appeal in writing as soon as practicable after

you have been informed of the decision and within five days of receiving the written decision, clearly stating your grounds for appeal. The outcome letter will indicate who the appeal should be addressed to.

We will invite you to an appeal hearing and remind you of your right to be accompanied.

The appeal hearing will reconsider the original decision. You will have an opportunity to expand on your reasons for appeal and the appeal manager will ask questions to clarify issues.

The outcome of an appeal hearing will be confirmed in writing. The outcomes of an appeal hearing can take many forms including

- The original outcome is upheld
- The original outcome is overturned and
 - No capability sanction is issued
 - The capability sanction remains, and the objective is changed
 - A different capability sanction is issued
 - Some other action is informed e.g. demotion

The decision from an appeal will be final and there no further right of appeal

ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

You have a statutory right to be accompanied to the formal capability meeting. This may be an employee of the business, or an official employed by a trade union. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany an employee. The role of the companion is to support the employee. They may address the meeting to sum up the case, respond on behalf of you to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the meeting. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on your behalf, address the meeting against your wishes, prevent you from speaking or generally disrupt the proceeding of the meeting.

NONE ATTENDANCE

You must make every effort to attend all formal meetings. The meeting will only be rearranged once. If you are persistently unable or unwilling to attend a capability meeting without good cause the capability manager will make a decision based the evidence available.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

PRINCIPLES

Problems and misunderstanding are bound to arise from time to time wherever people work together. We are committed to resolving such problems quickly, effectively and fairly. We encourage an environment that promotes open communication and that allows for free and informal discussion of any work-related problem. Occasionally, however, problems will arise that may only be resolved through a more formal procedure.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all permanent employees and those retained on a contract basis. Any individual or group of individuals who believes they are not being treated fairly may invoke this procedure.

OVERVIEW

- You should raise any problems or concerns you have about your work, working environment, working relationships or your treatment at work.
- Informal intervention should resolve most concerns
- If necessary, an investigation will be conducted to establish the facts
- You will be given opportunity to put your case forward and provide full details
- You will be entitled to be accompanied at formal meetings
- You will have the right to appeal against the grievance outcome

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITMENT

- To resolve problems quickly and consistently in line with this policy
- To ensure that all line managers are fully trained in the management of handling grievance issues.
- To ensure fair treatment of individuals in line with the Equal Opportunities procedures.
- To ensure that policy is in line with current legislation

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

- To be aware of the grievance policy and raise any problems/issues with your immediate manager
- To discuss/inform your line manager as soon as possible after a problem has arisen

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

Issues that may cause grievance include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Working practices
- Working environment
- Organisational change
- Equal opportunities
- Work relations
- Bullying and harassment
- Discrimination

Issues which would not normally be considered as a grievance under this policy include:

- Actual dismissal
- Contemplated dismissal
- Disciplinary action short of dismissal
- Other action by the Council where an appeal procedure already exists

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL

The majority of grievances can be resolved without raising a formal grievance and you should aim to resolve by raising concerns with your line manager. If your grievance relates to your line manager, you should raise with another manager. You should be able to explain your complaint and suggest how you think it could be resolved. You need to be able to provide enough detail about the complaint for it to be properly considered. If your grievance cannot be resolved in this way or you are not satisfied with the response, you should then raise the matter formally.

FORMAL STAGES

It is always our intention that issues will be resolved informally and at an early stage wherever possible. However, on occasions when it is necessary to use the formal procedure you should do so in writing. You should set out the nature of the grievance by making a detailed written statement outlining the complaint and how, in your opinion, it might be resolved, including any copies of relevant documentation. You will receive written acknowledgement of within five days of receipt of your written grievance and you will be invited to a formal meeting at which you have the right to be accompanied.

STAGE 2

You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance, and we will try to resolve matters to your satisfaction. You will be given an opportunity to explain your grievance and how you would like it to be resolved. The meeting will be adjourned to give consideration and further investigation may be needed. You may need to attend a second meeting as part of the investigation.

After the meeting the outcome of your grievance will be confirmed in writing to you. The letter will include what action will be taken to resolve the grievance and details of whom you have the right to appeal to.

STAGE 3

Should you feel that your grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily you have the right to appeal. You should state the grounds for the appeal in writing. You will be invited to attend an appeal meeting and you have the right to be accompanied. Wherever possible this meeting will be dealt with by an impartial manager who has not previously been involved in the case.

After the meeting the outcome will be confirmed in writing to you. Once the decision has been delivered, this concludes the internal process.

RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

You have a statutory right to be accompanied to formal grievance meetings. This may be an employee of the business, or an official employed by a trade union. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany an employee. The role of the companion is to support the employee. They may address the meeting to sum up the case, respond on behalf of you to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the hearing. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on your behalf, address the meeting against your wishes, prevent you from speaking or generally disrupt the proceeding of the meeting.

TIMINGS

It is the intention that all formal grievances raised are dealt with and resolved as quickly as possible and wherever possible within a month.

- A grievance must be raised within 3 months of the issue arising
- All formal grievances should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt
- The grievance hearing should be arranged as soon as possible following acknowledgement
- If your representative cannot attend this meeting the alternative date suggested by you must be within 5 days of the original date unless mutually agreed
- Any appeal may be received within 5 days of receipt of written confirmation of the decision at the grievance hearing

DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE STATEMENT

Hughenden Parish Council recognises the problem of harassment (i.e. behaviour which is unwanted by the recipient or which affects the dignity of any individual or groups of individuals at work) as one that threatens employee's jobs, promotion, and training opportunities, health and well-being. Harassment by affecting work and security is recognised as having a detrimental effect on the application of skills to the benefit of the customer, labour turnover and absence. We are committed to ending harassment of any grounds. Offenders will be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure. Those suffering harassment at work will be provided with all possible assistance and the investigation procedure is available to ensure sensitivity and confidentiality. Please also see Hughenden Parish Council Code of Conduct.

ABSENCE POLICY

PRINCIPLES

The attendance policy is underpinned by the principles that both the employer and employee will act responsibly. The employer will provide a conducive and sound working environment whilst the employee will make every effort to maintain regular and consistent attendance at work. Hughenden Parish Council's overall objective is to ensure that all employees are fit and healthy enough to be able to carry out their work on a regular basis to the required standard.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees and those retained on a contract basis. The same standards apply to all.

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITMENT

- To ensure that the policy is applied consistently across the business.
- To ensure that all line managers are fully trained in the management of sick absence.
- To ensure that all employees are dealt with sensitively and respectfully in all matters of ill health.
- To explore all possibilities to enable an individual to return to work from sick leave.
- To carry out a return to work meeting following each occasion of sick absence and beware of any ongoing health issues.
- To consistently monitor the sick records of their employees and consider taking appropriate action if the trigger point that indicates an unsatisfactory level of sick absence have been reached or exceeded.

- To maintain regular contact with any individual on long-term sick leave, this should be at least once a month.
- To seek advice and guidance as required on general sick absence issues and on individual cases requiring a medical referral.
- To carry out wellbeing meeting if and when appropriate.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT

- To take due care of their health and to take all reasonable steps to remain fit to carry out their role on a regular basis to the standards required.
- To report their sick absence and to keep their line manager regularly informed of their progress.
- To keep their line manager informed regarding any medical appointments during normal working hours.
- To provide the required medical certification before any entitlement to sick pay is authorised.
- To discuss with their line manager any adjustments required to their working environment due to a temporary or chronic medical condition.
- To co-operate with the company over supplying additional information required to enable the company to better understand a medical condition/period of absence.
- To attend any appointment with an appointed medical practitioner for a medical examination.

DEFINITION OF ABSENCE TYPES

Short Term Absence - Any period of up to 4 weeks of absence from work due to sickness.

Long Term Absence - Any period of absence from work due to sickness that lasts for more than 4 weeks.

Unauthorised Absence - Any period of absence where reporting (i.e. notifying line manager of absence) or certifying guidelines (i.e. not providing a doctor's certificate when required) have not been followed.

Lateness - Instances where an employee does not arrive at work to start at their agreed time. Lateness and poor time-keeping can be as disruptive as other forms of absence, particularly when work cannot begin until arrangements are made to provide cover.

REPORTING SICK ABSENCE

Any absence must be reported to your line manager or another manager if your line manager is not available. This should be within one hour of your normal time of starting work, or at the very latest by the end of your day of absence, if you're unable to attend work.

Only in exceptional circumstance should an absence be reported by anyone other than the employee.

Your line manager will establish an expected return to work date or agree the date that the employee should provide an update on their progress. You must maintain contact on a daily basis to keep your line manager updated on the circumstances and likely return to work date.

If an absence is not reported on the first day, the absence may be regarded as unauthorised and sick pay could be withheld.

Failure to adhere to the absence reporting procedure and/or unauthorised absence may also be dealt with as a disciplinary issue.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

A self-certification of absence must be completed by you for all absences.

A doctor's fit note signed by a GP must be produced for absence that is 8 calendar days or more, this needs to be submitted to your line manager immediately. You must continue to submit medical certificates as and when issued by your GP to cover all dates of absence, including non-work days for a continuing period of absence. Failure to produce the appropriate medical documentation may lead to sick pay being withheld.

In the event of an overpayment, deductions will be made from the next appropriate monthly earnings.

MANAGEMENT OF SHORT TERM SICK ABSENCE

On return to work following each period of sick absence a Back to Work meeting will be held with you. The purpose of the meeting is to welcome you back to work, make sure you are fully recovered and to update you on what's been happening whilst you have been absent. During the meeting the reason for the absence will be discussed and also a review of your overall sick record.

If your level of sickness absence is causing concern and may reach or has reached an unacceptable level, you will be informed that if the absence levels continue at the same rate, disciplinary action could be taken. Any remedial action taken concerning sickness will clearly set out the improvement in attendance required and the period over which the improvement is required.

When reviewing a sickness absence, the nature of the sickness and other relevant circumstances will be taken into account. In the event of a single absence exceeding 10 days caused by one illness or injury, the meeting would normally be restricted to confirming whether the individual was now fit and receiving any on-going treatment.

MANAGEMENT OF LONG TERM SICK ABSENCE

Hughenden Parish Council will support you if you suffer a long-term illness or injury. You must keep your line manager informed about your progress and anticipated return to work date. It is accepted that the illness or injury is beyond the control of the employee and it is not a disciplinary matter.

You are expected to maintain regular contact with your line manager during the period of absence and once you've been absent for 4 weeks continuous the company may arrange a well-being meeting with you. The meeting will normally take place in the workplace with your line manager and the following will be reviewed.

- Your current prognosis
- A likely return to work date
- Advice and guidance issued by your Doctor or Specialist or other medical advisors
- Any support the company can offer you
- Update on the work place if you require this
- Any other concerns you may have

Hughenden Parish Council reserves the right to seek medical opinion or request an examination to establish the likelihood of your return to work and being fit to carry out your role, (the individual will be asked to give written consent under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988). Any information will be relating to the current illness and be held confidentially, the information will be discussed and reviewed with yourself. By gaining such information we hope to gain a better understanding of your period of incapacity, when the medical opinion is that you will be able to return to work and any support that Hughenden Parish Council can put in place to support such a return.

On your return to work Hughenden Parish Council recognises the difficulties you may face. Your line manager will discuss arrangements to support your return and this may include a phased return to work. A phased return to work will be considered where in the best interest of securing a return to work and with supporting medical recommendation. During any phased return to work you will be paid for the day you actually work only.

Where an absence has continued for a considerable period of time Hughenden Parish Council will review and consider a course of action to establish whether it is likely that the individual will be able to fulfil their contract of employment. If you are no longer capable to perform your contractual role due to ill health Hughenden Parish Council will seek to make reasonable adjustments to change your role or move you to a suitable alternative role if there is one available. In some circumstances it may not be possible for you to return to the workplace and Hughenden Parish Council may have no alternative but to consider terminating your employment on the ground of capability due to ill health.

RECORDING AND MONITORING OF ABSENCE

All period of absence will be record and monitored.

An all-day hospital appointment should be recorded as a day's sickness absence and a self-certification and evidence of the appointment submitted.

Hughenden Parish Council monitors absence as it is a costly expense to the business and we will support you during periods of absence but we also have an expectation that you will maintain regular and consistent attendance at work. There are two benchmarks used to define level of sick absence - frequency and duration. No more than 4 periods of short-term absence or no more than 10 days short-term sick absence during a rolling 12-month period. The frequency and pattern of all absences is regularly reviewed and unacceptably high levels of absence, or failure to correctly report absence, may lead to disciplinary action.

If you have been absent due to sickness and are found not to have been genuinely ill, you may be subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

PARISH COUNCIL SICK PAY

You will be entitled to the following Company sick pay, paid at your basic daily rate. In order to receive such payment, you must comply with the sickness absence reporting procedure, and complete a sickness absence form on return from absence.

During 1 st Year of service	One months full pay and (after completing 4 months' service) 2 months' half pay
During 2 nd year of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
During 3 rd year of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During 4 th and 5 th year of service	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

STATUTORY SICK PAY

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is paid for a maximum of 28 weeks in any period of sick absence. It is not paid for the first 3 days of any absence and is paid for days you normally work. SSP is subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions as normal.

SSP cannot be paid for the first three days of sickness, these are called waiting days. Therefore, payment usually starts on the 4th day of absence, and continues for as long as you are absent, up to a maximum of 28 weeks in any one period of sickness.

SSP is paid in exactly the same way as normal earnings.

SSP is not payable in certain circumstances, the principle ones being:

- if your average weekly earnings are less than the figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance Contributions
- for absence of less than four days

- if your employment has terminated
- where Statutory Maternity, Paternity, or Adoption Pay is being paid to you
- for days on which you do not normally work (e.g. if you work Monday to Friday and not at weekends, SSP will normally apply to those five days only)
- if you are over 65 years of age or under the age of 16. The rules on SSP are very complex and you should not hesitate to raise any query you may have with your Manager.

MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

You are expected arrange appointments outside of your working hours. Where this is not possible you must obtain permission from your line manager prior to taking the time off.

Any appointment during work time must be either at the start of the day, end of the day or during your lunch hour. A maximum of two hours may be taken off and the time must be made up.

PERSONAL SICKNESS

Any record of sickness absence is for personal sickness only.

You are not able to record any cosmetic or non-essential treatment unless corrective surgery is required and supported by a medical report.

Should you not be able to attend work due to a family members sickness this is not recorded as your personal sickness. If you require time off you should speak to your line manager and discuss the circumstances and agree on the appropriate way for this leave to be recorded. In some cases where there are short term difficulties, you may wish to consider the use of holidays.

HOLIDAY WHILST ON LONG TERM SICKNESS

You may request to take holiday whilst you are on sickness absence. This needs to be agreed with your line manager prior to the holiday commencing. This will normally be accompanied by confirmation from your doctor/specialist that taking the holiday would be beneficial and aid your recovery.

You will continue to accrue holiday during any period of absence.

Holiday leave may be used to cover non-working days as part of a graduated return to work.

SICKNESS WHILST ON HOLIDAY

If you have holiday planned and you become sick and your personal sickness has had a seriously detrimental impact on the holiday you may claim sickness benefit and reclaim the annual leave. This is only available when the sickness has been notified to your line manager on the first day (not your return). This would be supported by a medical certificate

and is at the discretion of your immediate line manager. This will usually only apply in exceptional circumstances and where the illness has lasted for more than 7 days and is supported by a medical certificate.

EXPENSES POLICY

Where an employee is required to travel as a requirement of their job, the Council will reimburse actual expense and subsistence incurred in accordance with the scale laid down and published by HMRC in the annual salaries and allowances notification.

Hughenden Parish Council will reimburse you for all necessary approved travel, accommodation and other reasonable expenses incurred whilst you are engaged on authorised Hughenden Parish Council business.

You must check with your line manager regarding the precise rules and your entitlements before incurring any expenses, especially in relation to the standard of accommodation and travel plus any incidental expenses to which you may or may not be entitled.

All expense forms must be signed and dated by you and your line manager before they are submitted for payment. All expenses should be submitted within 3 months of being incurred. Any abuse of the Expense System will result in disciplinary action, which could result in summary dismissal.

JOB EVALUATION POLICY STATEMENT

Hughenden Parish Council (HPC) recognises the need to apply a consistent and transparent job evaluation process.

As a good employer HPC acknowledges its obligation to deliver equal pay for work of equal value. Pay banding assessment is based upon considerations of the post and its requirements, not on the post-holder or any particular skills, qualifications or experience that they may possess.

The evaluation exercise will be carried out by a competent external provider and be presented to the Staffing Committee which will then recommend to Full Council as appropriate.

Employees are entitled to appropriate representation and advice during the evaluation process.

Scope

- New posts
- Posts revised as a result of a re-organisation
- Where a post-holder believes that they have evidence that their job has changed significantly since the previous evaluation, a request can be made to the Staffing Committee to instigate a re-evaluation.

REDUNDANCY POLICY STATEMENT

Hughenden Parish Council (HPC) recognises that organisation changes may result in staff redundancy. Best efforts will be made to reduce the likelihood of a redundancy situation arising and if it does the Parish Council will seek to minimise the impact upon staff.

External professional advice will be sought to ensure that as a minimum the Parish Council meets its legal obligations.

OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

You are expected to maintain regular and consistent attendance at work. Accurate weekly Attendance Records must be kept in line with the attendance record procedure so that we can pay you accurately and that in the event of a fire or evacuation we are aware of your whereabouts.

ATTENDANCE AND TIME-KEEPING

You are expected to manage your own time, attend work consistently and to be punctual. If you are unable to attend work on time for any reason, please make sure you notify your line manager by speaking to them.

Persistent lateness will result in an informal warning. Any further lateness will result in further disciplinary action being taken as set out in this Employee Handbook.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/TRAVEL ARRANGEMENT DISRUPTION

You are expected to make every effort to attend work. However, in the event of inclement weather or the disruption to your travel arrangements to work, you may take the time off. This time off must be pre-authorised by your line manager and can either be taken as unpaid leave or holiday.

When the Company is aware of potential weather disruptions e.g. snow, specific guidance will be provided by your line manager as in some business areas we need to maintain a level of service during opening hours.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

BY YOU

In the event that you wish to leave Hughenden Parish Council's employment, at least one month's notice is required unless your actual notice period specified in your Contract of Employment is different.

All resignations must be supplied in writing, stating the reason for resigning from your post and the date you wish to leave Hughenden Parish Council. You may be requested to take any outstanding annual leave you are entitled to during your notice period.

BY THE COMPANY

You will be entitled to receive from Hughenden Parish Council four weeks' notice until 4 years' service, then one week for each completed years of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks or the notice as is specified in your Contract of Employment.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

You will be summarily dismissed (i.e. without notice) if there has been an act of gross misconduct. Generally this includes any breach of duty/conduct, which brings Hughenden Parish Council into disrepute, or action, which is inconsistent with the relationship, required between employee and employer. Further examples are contained under Gross Misconduct in the Disciplinary Procedure section of this handbook.

GARDEN LEAVE

If either you or Hughenden Parish Council serves notice on the other to terminate your employment Hughenden Parish Council may require you to take "garden leave" for all or part of the remaining period of your employment. During any period of "garden leave" you are still an employee and are to remain available should the need arise. You are not able to take up alternative employment whilst on a period of "garden leave".

APPROACH TO SHORTAGE OF WORK AND REDUNDANCY

Every attempt will be made to ensure your continuing employment in the event that Hughenden Parish Council is faced with a shortage of work or is unable to provide you with work for any other reason. However, this could include temporarily placing you on short-time working or laying you off from work. In these circumstances you will be paid for those hours worked, or in accordance with the statutory guarantee pay provisions.

If the need arises to reduce the number of employees for the future viability of Hughenden Parish Council, we will use criteria as appropriate to the circumstances at the time of redundancy and ensure a full consultation process takes place.

CONFIDENTIALITY

During the course of your employment you may be made aware of confidential information and it is vital that this information is kept 100% confidential. Below details the restrictions and controls in place.

All information that:

- is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has

- otherwise been acquired by you in confidence,
- relates particularly to the Council, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
- has not been made public by, or with our authority, shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our written consent.

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

In particular, you are required to comply with all of Hughenden Parish Council's policies and procedures on confidentiality of information and data protection.

A confidentiality agreement will need to be signed by every employee when requested to do so.

We view confidentiality as critical and any breaches of the required standards and expectation relating to confidentiality will lead to disciplinary action being taken and may result in your dismissal for gross misconduct.

HYGIENE & PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Hughenden Parish Council is proud of its standards of service to its customers, clients and suppliers. You are expected to strive constantly to maintain and improve these standards. To this end as a representative of Hughenden Parish Council we expect you to maintain high standards of personal hygiene and appearance at all times. The following standards of personal hygiene and appearance must be maintained at all times. The following standards of personal hygiene and appearance apply:

APPEARANCE

All employees are expected to present for work in a highly professional manner and dress to maintain the reputation of Hughenden Parish Council.

Hughenden Parish Council recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and abilities of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security requirements, with individual circumstances being considered on a case by case basis.

- All employees are expected to look smart
- All makeup should be discreet
- Jewellery should be minimal.

- Hair must be kept clean and tidy

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Employees are expected to maintain a high level of personal hygiene at all times and failure to do so will be brought to an individual's attention by their line manager.

- Keep your clothing and person clean
- Use effective deodorant if necessary

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

Hughenden Parish Council has a responsibility under UK domestic and European legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees, clients and contractors. We wish to work with you in ensuring this safety and welfare and encourages a two way communication process to address such issues.

You do have a responsibility to follow procedures and take reasonable care of your own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by your actions or omissions e.g. clients, visitors, and suppliers. Please ensure you take all reasonable steps to maintain a safe and healthy working environment and refer to any relevant legal notices relating to health and safety including our Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance.

It is always the intention of Hughenden Parish Council to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose. We recognise that both employer and employees have a vital role to play in the health and safety of all our employees.

We aim to keep accidents, injuries and work related ill health to the lowest level practicable.

Where hazards exist we will evaluate, control and bring these to your attention. We have a legal duty to co-operate in all safety related matters, not to endanger ourselves or others and not to misuse anything provided for safety. We expect that all persons will ensure that appropriate safety rules are followed. Please also refer to Hughenden Parish Council Health and Safety Manual/Policy Statement.

DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, employers are required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and other persons who may be affected by the business. This is especially with regard to:

- Provision and maintenance of equipment and systems of work.
- Use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.

- Provision of information, supervision, instruction and training.
- Maintenance of a safe and risk-free place of work and access to it.
- A safe working environment and facilities and arrangements that is adequate for the welfare of employees.

DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES

You have the duty to look after yourself and other people who may be affected by your act of negligence. You must comply with safety rules and requirements and must not misuse anything provided for safety and welfare purposes.

CABLES AND POWER LEADS

All cables and power leads should be out of the way of the main causeway of employees. Any that cannot be redirected should be covered with cable protectors.

ENTRANCES, EXITS, WINDOWS, CORRIDORS & DOORWAYS

All entrances and exits from the building in which you work should be kept clear at all times. All windows should be well secured at the end of each day.

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT AND KEYBOARDS

All employees are responsible for ensuring their keyboards and monitors are correctly positioned for good vision and comfortable usage. You can help yourself by following these tips:

- Do not sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeat stretching movements
- Adjust your keyboard and screen to get a good keying and viewing position. A space in front of the key board is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists while not keying
- Do not bend your hands up at the wrist when keying. Try to keep a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch your fingers.
- Make sure the screen is focused properly and can be easily read
- Use the brightness control on the screen to suit the lighting conditions in the room.

Hughenden Parish Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of users of display screen equipment (DSE).

Hughenden Parish Council recognises that risks associated with DSE are directly related to the type and layout of the workstation, the nature of the work and the physical and mental attributes of the person using the DSE. We will therefore provide any necessary information,

training and support to users to enable them to understand and manage these risks. In addition, we will also ensure that we risk assess all DSE and whenever possible, eliminate or, if not, reduce all identified risks to as low as is reasonably practicable.

Finally, please play your part and report any health and safety hazard you identify or observe.

SMOKING

Smoking at work or in any other work or public premises is illegal. This includes any company vehicles. If you wish to smoke, you must identify the designated smoking areas outside of your working premises or client premises.

Failure to comply with this policy may be classed as gross misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

As a reminder, if you wish to smoke, this should be done in your normal break allowance. Please ensure any visitors to our business obey these rules.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Any employee's ability to do the job should not be affected by alcohol, illegal drugs or substances.

If you are taking medication that may affect your ability to do the job, you must inform your line manager.

Under legislation we, as your employer, have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of all our employees and similarly you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of Hughenden Parish Council and/or the health and safety of our employees.

The effects of alcohol and drugs can be numerous. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list:

- absenteeism (e.g. unauthorised absence, lateness, excessive levels of sickness, etc.);
- higher accident levels (e.g. at work, elsewhere, driving to and from work); and
- work performance (e.g. difficulty in concentrating, tasks taking more time, making mistakes, etc.).

Hughenden Parish Council is concerned for the health and safety of all employees and aims to support individuals with alcohol/drug problems. We will discuss problems fully and sympathetically and encourage the individual to follow prescribed treatments. However,

ultimately, if you fail to follow prescribed treatments or take appropriate action as prescribed by a medical specialist to treat your condition, we may consider taking appropriate action, which may lead to formal warnings and the termination of your employment.

DRUG-TAKING/POSSESSION

Drug-taking and possession of drugs are illegal. Any employee found to be taking, dealing or possessing drugs on Company or client premises or whilst operating in our business time will have the appropriate disciplinary action taken which may result in dismissal.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

You should find out how to evacuate any building from which you are working in or visiting on behalf of our business. You must follow these procedures:

FIRE

Fire prevention is everyone's responsibility. You must ensure that you fully understand and follow any fire regulations of our business. This should include knowing the location of all fire exits, escape routes, assembly points and fire extinguishers and know how to use fire extinguishers. If you discover a fire you should sound the alarm by using the "Break Glass" panels by the fire exits. Dial 999 to call the fire brigade and exit the building by the quickest and safest route.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

You must report any accident you have whilst at work or on Company business to your line manager as soon as possible. In addition, you must also report any client, customer or 3rd party accident on any of our premises. You must ensure you fully comply with Hughenden Parish Council accident reporting procedures in the accident book under the first aid box.

FIRST AID

You should take responsibility to identify the whereabouts of first aid boxes within your workplace. We will ensure that all first aid boxes are regularly checked and maintained with an appropriate level of supplies, and that the appropriate number of trained first aiders are always on site.

WHISTLE-BLOWING: PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Hughenden Parish Council aims to conduct business with the highest standards of honesty and integrity. As a result of this, we would ask that you share this aim in order to maintain the same standards. Any fraud, misconduct or wrong-doing by either Hughenden Parish Council or its employees should be reported. We believe that it is essential to create an

environment in which employees feel able to raise concerns internally without fear of disciplinary action being taken against them as a result of any disclosure and be assured that an investigation will take place.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from dismissal or other disciplinary action when they report wrong-doing by their employers for specified issues. These specified issues are called 'qualifying disclosures'.

The act aims to promote greater openness between employers and employees in the workplace. We strongly believe that those who report wrong-doing should not be victimised.

Examples of 'Qualifying disclosures include:

- A criminal act
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Health & Safety breaches
- Damage to the environment
- Concealment of any of the above.
- Any suspected fraudulent activity

PRINCIPLES OF THE ACT.

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. You should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of this nature that you become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to whoever raised the issue.
- No one will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for your future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because you have raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an employee for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the Company's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent and should report the matter to a director.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A DISCLOSURE

Where you wish to make a disclosure concerning one or more of these examples of wrongdoing, you can:

- Discuss the concern with the Chairman. We have a responsibility to listen and respond to any matter that is of concern to any employee.
- Another option would be to raise your concerns via the Council's grievance procedure; this process would not however give you the protection of the Public Interest Disclosure Act. You must make clear you are following the grievance procedure in this instance.

If the above are not appropriate or the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, you should put your concerns in writing to the Chairman who will arrange for an independent review of the case which will include a full and fair investigation taking place with a view to reaching a sensible and fair resolution of the issue. There may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary, Hughenden Parish Council reserves the right to make a referral on your behalf without your consent.

If on conclusion of the above stages, you reasonably believe that the appropriate action has not been taken, you should consider reporting the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

- HM Revenue & Customs;
- the Financial Services Authority;
- the Office of Fair Trading;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Environment Agency.

Hughenden Parish Council recognises that there may be some cases where no wrong doing is found through internal procedures. In such cases, if the disclosure is reasonable, made in good faith and the information believed to be true, protection will be given, and no disciplinary action will be taken.

YOUR DATA

PERSONAL DETAILS

At the commencement of your employment you will have provided us with various personal details, which we will legitimately need to perform your employment contract. Wherever possible you will be expected to provide a landline number where you can be contacted e.g. during periods of sickness. You must notify Hughenden Parish Council immediately of any change of personal details, e.g. name, address, telephone number, next of kin, and bank details.

You must notify us of any such changes, as, for example, without your changed bank details, Hughenden Parish Council would not be able to deposit your pay in your bank account. We cannot be responsible for any issues arising out of your failure to notify changes in your personal details.

ACCESS TO PRIVATE RECORDS

All employees are entitled to access information that Hughenden Parish Council holds about them and to be kept informed about the type of data that is held about them and how this data is processed.

If you wish to make a request for access to your records and/or obtain copies of specific documents you should follow the instructions below.

Hughenden Parish Council will respond to your request within one month, however in complex request this timeline may be extended but you would be fully informed of this.

- you should submit your request, in writing to your line manager, detailing the specific information that you are seeking access to. The Company is not obliged to respond to a request if it cannot reasonably identify the person making the request or reasonably identify information requested
- A suitable date/time will be arranged for you to have access to the information. Please note that it will not be possible for you to remove the documents from the designated room but you will be able to request copies of specific documents to be provided

TRAINING RECORDS

Hughenden Parish Council keeps a record of all training events you attend. These records will be kept by your line manager and you may be asked to sign to confirm that you have received training in specific skills and tasks.

PARISH COUNCIL PROTECTION

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The security of personal property is your responsibility, and Hughenden Parish Council does not accept liability for loss or damage to your property at any time, including while travelling on Council business, so we'd advise you to make your own insurance arrangements. You are strongly advised not to bring valuables to work with you or leave them unattended on Hughenden Parish Council's premises.

CAR PARKING

Whilst Hughenden Parish Council does not undertake to provide car parking facilities usually some space is available. However, Hughenden Parish Council cannot accept any responsibility for any damage to private vehicles and their contents are left at your own risk. Where a parking space isn't provided you'll need to make sure you are parked both safely and legally while at work. Your line manager will explain any specific local travel or parking arrangements.

PARISH COUNCIL PROPERTY

You will be provided with the necessary equipment to perform your role with us. However, you must not use council equipment, facilities or time for anything other than activities relating directly to your employment. You have a responsibility to take proper care of all council property issued to you. The property shall be kept secure and safe to minimise loss of damage and should not be used for any activities other than those related to council business. Similarly, you must not remove council property from council premises without prior consent. This includes information sent electronically by computer. Any loss of damage should be reported immediately to your line manager. If you are in any doubt, please speak to your manager for guidance.

Should you leave Hughenden Parish Council's employment you must return all council property and information to your Manager, within one week of your leave date if not on your final date employed. This includes council information in your possession or control whatever the format, this includes all data files, internal and external contact details, business cards and all storage mediums. Failure to do so may result in salary payment to the value of the missing items being withheld until all items have been returned.

RETURN OF COUNCIL PROPERTY

On the termination of your employment you must return all our property which is in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return such items will result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you.

TELEPHONE CALLS

The use of council telephones either outgoing or incoming is not permitted except in the case of emergency and with management approval.

You should not receive calls at work and should discourage family and friends from calling except in an emergency.

PERSONAL MOBILE PHONES

The use of personal mobile telephones at work is not encouraged, these should be kept securely and only used during agreed breaks. Personal mobile phones should be switched to silent mode during working hours and not be visible on your work desk. Personal mobile phones should not be answered within sight of clients or customers.

PHONE CALLS WHILST DRIVING

You are not expected to take any business phone calls whilst you are driving. You should pull over to the side of the road in an appropriate place before making or receiving any telephone calls.

COMPUTER AND EMAIL USAGE

Misuse of the e-mail/Internet can expose Hughenden Parish Council to significant risk. Therefore you must only use e-mail and access the Internet on authorised and recognised business. Care must be taken when attaching documents to ensure there is no infringement of copyright and you must not disclose confidential information.

You must not send or download defamatory, offensive or pornographic material.

Hughenden Parish Council reserves the right to intercept any e-mail for monitoring purposes, record keeping purposes, preventing or detecting crime, investigating or detecting the unauthorised use of Hughenden Parish Council's telecommunication system or ascertaining compliance with Hughenden Parish Council's practice and procedures.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

We recognise the use of social networking sites in everyday life. However, we do not wish for Hughenden Parish Council to be referred to on any social networking sites and therefore we expect you not to post any comments on any social networking sites about our business either good or bad unless authorised to do so, on the official website, facebook or twitter page. Any reference to our business on any social networking site, outwith the above criteria, will be deemed a disciplinary offence.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

Should you be contacted by the Media in relation to Hughenden Parish Council you are not permitted to comment or make any statement on behalf of Hughenden Parish Council. All and any contact with the Media, including newspapers, radio, television etc. should be directed to the Clerk at clerk@hughendenpc.org.uk.

PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

- Standard of Conduct Statement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Capability Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Statement
- Absence Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Job Evaluation Statement
- Redundancy Policy Statement

Should you have any questions relating to the content of the Employee Handbook please speak to your immediate line manager.

Appendix D

Hughenden Parish Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

Hughenden Parish Council is committed to providing the best quality of service to the residents that it serves but appreciates that there may be times when things go wrong. The purpose of our complaint's procedure is to put things right in such situations. The Council will take all complaints seriously.

1.1 The Parish Council is eager to hear people's comments and committed to making full use of complaints information to contribute to continuous service improvement. Important information about areas for improvement can be obtained both from a single complaint and from patterns of complaints, highlighted by detailed monitoring.

1.2 At all times, all parties will be treated fairly, and the complaints process will be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

2. SCOPE

2.1 Definition of a Complaint

For the purpose of this policy, the following definition of a complaint will be used:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council."

2.2 What the complaints procedure will deal with:

The complaints procedure will deal with matters of maladministration, which is if the Parish Council does something the wrong way, fails to do something it should do or does something it should not do. Some examples include:

- neglect or unjustified delay
- malice, bias, or unfair discrimination
- failure to tell people their rights
- failure to provide advice or information when reasonably requested
- providing misleading or inaccurate advice
- inefficiency, ineffectiveness, bad and unprofessional practice or conduct

2.3 When the Complaints Procedure is Not Appropriate

The Parish Council's Complaints Procedure will not be used in respect of the following types of complaint:

a) Financial Irregularity

The Parish Clerk or Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) should endeavor to provide an explanation of the item.

If the complainant is not satisfied, complaints about financial irregularity should be referred to the Council's Auditor, whose name and address can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or RFO will advise the complainant of their statutory right to object to the Council's audit of accounts pursuant to S16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, it may be necessary for the Parish Clerk or RFO to consult the auditor/Audit Commission.

b) Criminal Activity

The Parish Clerk should refer the complainant to the Police.

c) Member Conduct

In the event of a complaint relating to a Member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the complainant will be advised to make their complaint to the Buckinghamshire Council's Standards Committee.

d) Employee Conduct

A complaint relating to the conduct of an employee will be dealt with via the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Complaints that an employee may have about a colleague will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Grievance Procedure and Whistleblowing Policy. Complaints that an employee may have about a Member will be referred to Buckinghamshire Council's Standards Committee.

3. EVERYDAY PROBLEMS, QUERIES AND COMMENTS

The Council receives queries, problems and comments as part of its day-to-day running, and they should not all be regarded as complaints. These are routine and expected and are generally resolved quickly to the customer's satisfaction.

If someone is dissatisfied with the original service or response they received and wishes to take the matter further, then the issue should be recognized as a complaint.

4. DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018

4.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 must be complied with when Dealing with a complaint and the complainant's personal details.

4.2 By making a formal complaint with the Parish Council, individuals are deemed to be giving consent for their personal data to be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Parish Council's Information and Data Protection Policy.

4.3 Personal information provided will only be used for the purpose for which it has been given and may be shared with a third party if the Parish Council deems that it will assist in resolving the issue raised.

5. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The stages of the procedure are designed to provide the complainant with a thorough and fair means of redress and to provide a framework for officers to work within.

5.1 Stage One

In the first instance, a complaint about a service, procedure or administration of the Council will be dealt with in the following way:

- a) Contact the member of staff who you have been dealing with and tell them about the problem. This can be done in person, by phone, by email, by letter or by using the complaints form attached to this policy document. Contact information for the Council's premises is available at the end of this policy document.
- b) Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint straight away. We aim to reply to all correspondence within ten working days.
- c) Should the complaint not be resolved by staff, complainants will be advised that they may instigate stage two of the complaints procedure, which will result in a complaints meeting being held.

5.2 Stage Two – Prior to the Complaints Meeting

- a) The complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter, email or complaints form) to the Parish Clerk or other nominated officer. This may be done by the complainant, or someone acting for him/her; it may be done by a Council officer if the complainant needs help. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to an officer of the Council, he/she will be advised to put the complaint to the Chairman of the Council.
- b) Following receipt of the complaint, the Council officer will immediately refer the written complaint to the Full Council.
- c) The Council officer will provide a written acknowledgement of the complaint within seven working days. The letter will advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Parish Council. The complainant will also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether notice of it will be given in the usual way. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and will be informed that they may bring a representative with them.
- d) The complainant will be notified that they must provide the Council with copies of any documentation or evidence relied on, seven clear working days prior to the Parish Council meeting.
- e) The Council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting, and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the Parish Council meeting.

5.3 Stage 3 - At the Complaints Meeting

- a) Hughenden Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. It is general practice that the public and press will be excluded due to the confidential nature of many complaints.
- b) The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

- c) The complainant, or their representative, will outline the grounds for complaint and then questions may be asked (i) by the Parish Clerk or other nominated officer, and then (ii) by Members.
- d). The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer may then explain the Council's position and questions may be asked (i) by the complainant and then (ii) by Members.
- e) The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer should be offered the opportunity to summarize their position.
- f) The complainant is then given the opportunity to summarize their position.
- g) The Parish Clerk, or other nominated officer, and the complainant will be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, **both** parties will be invited back.
- h) The Parish Clerk, or other nominated officer, and the complainant will be given the opportunity to wait for the decision, but if the decision is unlikely to be finalized on that day they will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
- i) The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days of it having been made, together with details of any action to be taken.
- j) The decision will be reported to the next full Council meeting, which will be open to the public and the press.
- k) After the complaint's procedure has been followed, the complainant has no right to further appeal, and it remains the position that the Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over the Parish Council.

5.4 Stage 4 - Council Representation

If the Parish Clerk or other nominated officer represents the position of the Council at the meeting, putting forward justification for the action or procedure complained of, he/she should not advise the Parish Council, as they need to determine the matter themselves.

5.5 Stage 5 - Analysis

Complaints will be analysed annually by the Parish Clerk to spot patterns of serious complaints and lessons for service improvement, as well as assessing how well the complaints procedure is being followed.

6. UNREASONABLE AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to proceed when the complaint clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other procedure should or has been taken.

These matters will be referred to the Parish Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. The Parish Clerk may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant and will inform the complainant to this effect, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

7 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Parish Clerk, and may be dismissed at their discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.

8. RESOLUTION AND REMEDIES

The aim in dealing with all complaints is to reach a resolution for the complainant, whether it is the remedy they were originally seeking or not. An explanation or an apology will always be needed.

7. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a two-year cycle. However, the policy will also be examined when a formal complaint is made to identify any areas requiring improvement.

Policy Due for Review: March 2022.

Contact Details for Hughenden Parish Council

Hughenden Parish Council
Council Offices
The Common
Great Kingshill
HP15 6EN
Tel: 01494 715296
email: clerk@hughendenpc.org.uk
Website: www.hughendenpc.org.uk

Equality & Human Rights Commission

Arndale House
The Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3AQ
Tel: 0161 829 8100
Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Monitoring Officer

Buckinghamshire Council
Wycombe Area Office
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
HP11 1BB
[Tel: 01494 416000](tel:01494416000)
Website: www.wycombe.gov.uk

**HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS FORM**

Name:	
Address:	
Contact No: :	
Email:	

Name of person in Council you have been dealing with	
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Details of your comment/complaint: (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

If you are making a complaint, what would you like the Council to do to put things right?