



## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

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

### **2. Definition**

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

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

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers and elected officials associated with Ringstead Parish Council.

### **4. Prohibited Conduct**

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

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

### **5. Reporting Procedure**

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chair of the Parish Council



Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **6. Investigation Procedure**

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Ringstead Parish Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chair of the Parish Council, (unless the report is involving the Chair, then this will be replaced by Vice Chair) who will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

## **7. Disciplinary Action**

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. This may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, demotion, or termination, depending on the severity of the offense and the circumstances involved.

## **8. Training and Awareness**

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

## **9. Compliance**

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

## **10. Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

## **Conclusion**

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

Policy Adopted Date: 12 February 2025

Policy Review Date: 2026