Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council

Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure

Reviewed by:

Policy BCSPC	Release Date	Review frequency	Reviewed Date	Amended Date	PC Approved Date
Policy 21	Oct 2024	2 Years	20/10/26 Cllr D Fisher		20/10/26

Document Sign Off & Adoption

This document was distributed to Councillors prior to the 20thOctober 2026 Parish Council Meeting. The Policy was discussed at the meeting. No revisions were required and the Policy was formally adopted. (Minute Ref:11b)

Adoption Witnessed by the Clerk to Brightwell Cum Sotwell Parish Council

Name: Nettie Gray

Signature: Nettie Gray

1. Document Sign-Off & Adoption

This document was distributed to Cllr G Gilgrass for review prior to the Parish Council Meeting. The Policy was discussed at the meeting. No revisions were required and the Policy was formally adopted (Meeting 22/9/26 Point)

Adoption witnessed by the Clerk to Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council:

Name: Nettie Gray

2. Policy Statement

The Parish Council and the Parish Clerk (The PC) recognises that harassment and victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Personal harassment includes tasteless jokes, abusive remarks, pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour, physical abuse, and bullying.

Bullying includes targeted and persistent offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, including misuse of power to undermine or injure the recipient.

The PC deplores all forms of personal harassment and aims to ensure a sympathetic working environment for all users.

3. Examples of Personal Harassment

Examples include:

- Insensitive jokes and pranks
- Lewd or abusive comments
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations
- Displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
- Abusive, threatening or insulting behaviour
- Name-calling
- Picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Undermining another's contribution or position
- Demanding unreasonable work output
- Blocking promotion or development opportunities

These examples are not exhaustive. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate.

4. Examples of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour related to sex or of a sexual nature. Examples include:

- Lewd or abusive comments of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome sexual touching
- Displaying sexually suggestive or offensive material
- Asking questions of a sexual nature
- Sexual propositions or advances

Sexual harassment also includes less favourable treatment because someone rejected or submitted to unwanted sexual conduct.

5. Examples of Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a PC member is treated unfavourably because they raised a genuine complaint or supported someone else in doing so.

6. Third-Party Harassment

The PC operates a zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment by parishioners, contractors, or visitors. If allegations are well-founded, actions may include:

- Warning the individual
- Banning them from PC premises/meetings
- Reporting behaviour to the police

The PC will take reasonable steps to deter and prevent harassment from third parties.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Employee Responsibilities

Members must behave professionally and must not engage in discriminatory, harassing, or aggressive behaviour. Any form of harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary or legal action.

7.2 Parish Council Responsibilities

The PC will ensure all members understand policies relating to harassment and bullying. Incidents will be dealt with promptly, sensitively, and confidentially.

8. Complaints Procedure

8.1 Informal Method

Victims of minor harassment should make it clear to the harasser that behaviour is unwelcome. If unable to do so verbally, a written request may be made with support from the Staffing Councillor or Chair.

8.2 Formal Method

Where informal steps fail or harassment is serious, a formal written grievance should be submitted to the Chair. Notes should include:

- Name of alleged harasser
- Nature of harassment
- Dates/times
- Witnesses
- Actions already taken

If necessary, complaints may be taken to OALC. The PC will separate parties during investigation and normally conclude within 14 days. A grievance meeting will follow, with the right to be accompanied. If allegations are well-founded, the harasser may be asked to resign. No employee will be victimised for raising a complaint.