KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

SEXUAL AND GENERAL HARASSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

King's Sutton Parish Council is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines our commitment to preventing harassment and the procedures for addressing any incidents that may occur.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. This includes harassment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

POLICY STATEMENT

We recognise that harassment and victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010

King's Sutton Parish Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment of any form in the workplace.

All employees, volunteers, councillors, and contractors are expected to adhere to this policy and contribute to a respectful work environment.

All employees have the right to work in an environment free from harassment.

Any complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and confidentially.

FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Personal Harassment: Includes insensitive jokes, lewd or abusive comments, deliberate exclusion from conversations, displaying offensive material, name-calling, and blocking promotion.

Sexual Harassment: Includes lewd comments about appearance, unwelcome touching, displaying sexually suggestive material, and sexual propositions.

Victimisation: Occurs when an employee is treated unfavourably for raising a genuine complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Third Party Harassment: Harassment by clients, customers, or visitors is not tolerated, and steps will be taken to address such behaviour.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee Responsibilities: Employees must always behave appropriately and professionally, including during work-related social events. Any form of harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action, referrals to the Unitary Authority Monitoring Officer and also the Police as appropriate for individuals committing any form of personal harassment.

Organisation Responsibilities: The organisation will ensure all staff understand the rules and policies related to preventing harassment and bullying. Prompt action will be taken to address any incidents.

INFORMAL PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT

We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that the harassed person may not wish to use the formal grievance procedure. In these circumstances they are encouraged to raise issues with a colleague of their choice as a confidential helper.

A victim of minor harassment should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this**.**

FORMAL PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED HARASSMENT (AS PER GRIEVANCE POLICY)

i. **Reporting**: Any employee who believes they have been subjected to harassment should report the incident to the Chair of the Parish Council, the Vice-chair of the Parish Council, or any other councillor.

ii. **Investigation**: The Parish Council will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the complaint. This may involve interviewing the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses.

iii. **Outcome**: If the investigation finds that harassment has occurred, appropriate action will be taken. This may include disciplinary action or reporting to the Monitoring Officer against the harasser and measures to prevent further harassment.

iv. **Confidentiality**: All reports and investigations will be handled with the utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved.

SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

King's Sutton Parish Council will provide support to any employee who has been subjected to harassment. This may include counselling services and adjustments to work arrangements if necessary.

Victims will not face any retaliation for reporting incidents of harassment.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

A copy of this policy will be emailed to all new and existing members of staff, volunteers, wardens and councillors.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current legislation and to remind councillors and staff of its content.

Policy adopted on: 6th February 2025 Minute 217.24/25 B

Review date: 20th January 2026 Minute FGP 78.25/26 C

Approved: 5th February 2026 Minute 210.25/26 B3.2