



Alvanley Parish Council

Dignity Policy

1. Introduction

Alvanley Parish Council is committed to ensuring that all employees, councillors, contractors and others who work with or for the Council are treated with **dignity, respect and courtesy** at all times. The Council has **zero tolerance** for bullying, harassment or victimisation in any form.

We aim to create a positive working environment where concerns are addressed early, fairly and sensitively.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out:

- How the Council will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment
- The standards of behaviour expected from all individuals working with the Council
- The steps available to resolve concerns, both informally and formally

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Alvanley Parish Council regardless of their contractual status or seniority. It applies to behaviour in the workplace, during work-related activities, during meetings and events, and communications (including online or via social media), and in any other context where the actions may impact working relationships or the reputation of the council.

4. Our Commitment

Alvanley Parish Council will not tolerate:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith

All complaints will be handled **promptly, sensitively and confidentially**, as far as reasonably possible. False or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

5. Definitions

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying or harassment is **unwanted behaviour** that has the purpose or effect of:

- Violating someone's dignity
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment

Examples include (not exhaustive):

- Verbal abuse or offensive comments
- Spreading rumours
- Deliberate exclusion from work activities
- Withholding information needed to perform a job
- Humiliating someone in front of others
- Abusing a position of authority
- Unwanted physical contact
- Lewd or inappropriate comments
- Offensive jokes or nicknames
- Inappropriate messages, emails or social media posts

Behaviour may still be harassment even if the person did not intend to offend.

6. Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they:

- Made a complaint
- Supported someone else's complaint
- Gave evidence in an investigation

Victimisation is strictly prohibited.

7. Reporting Concerns

7.1 If you are bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier

Report the matter to the **Parish Clerk**, or if appropriate, to the **Chairperson** or **Vice-Chairperson**.

7.2 If you are bullied or harassed by a councillor

Report the matter to the **Parish Clerk** or **Chairperson**. If the complaint concerns the Chairperson, report it to the **Vice-Chairperson**.

Concerns relating to potential breaches of the **Councillors' Code of Conduct** may be referred to the **Monitoring Officer**.

7.3 If you witness bullying or harassment

Report the incident confidentially to the **Parish Clerk, Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson**.

7.4 If you are bullied or harassed by another member of staff

You may choose either:

- **Informal resolution**, or
- **Formal complaint** through the grievance procedure

8. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns may be resolved informally by:

- Speaking directly to the person involved, or
- Asking the Parish Clerk, Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson to speak on your behalf

A neutral mediator may be used if suitable. If resolved informally, no disciplinary action is normally taken.

9. Formal Complaints

If informal steps are unsuccessful or inappropriate, a formal complaint may be made under the Council's **grievance procedure**.

You will be asked to provide:

- The name of the person involved
- Details of what happened
- Dates and times
- Names of witnesses
- Any steps already taken

An investigator will be appointed. A panel will then consider the findings and meet with you before making a decision. You will have the right to appeal.

10. Disciplinary Action

If the investigation indicates that bullying or harassment may have occurred, the Council may begin its **disciplinary procedure**.

11. Confidentiality

The Council will maintain confidentiality wherever possible. However, to ensure a fair investigation, the person complained about will normally need to know the details of the allegation.

12. Support During Investigations

The Council will consider reasonable measures to support wellbeing, such as:

- Adjusting duties
- Avoiding direct contact with the person complained about
- Providing a neutral point of contact
- Signposting to support services

13. Responsibilities

All councillors, the Parish Clerk and contractors must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Avoid behaviour that could be perceived as bullying or harassment
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson must:

- Lead by example
- Promote a respectful working culture
- Ensure concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately

14. Review

This is a non-contractual policy. Alvanley Parish Council will review it regularly to ensure it remains effective and up to date.

Approved by the Chairperson; Name: Jeanette Hughes

Date Policy adopted by Council: 9th September 2026

Review Date: May 2027