



# Highley Parish Council – Discipline & Grievance Policy (2026 Update)

*To be adopted at the Annual Council Meeting – 12 May 2026*

## 1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the procedures Highley Parish Council will follow when:

- Addressing concerns about an employee’s conduct or performance (disciplinary)
- Responding to concerns, complaints or problems raised by employees (grievances)

The aim is to ensure issues are dealt with **fairly, consistently, promptly and in line with ACAS best practice**.

The Council is committed to resolving matters informally wherever possible, promoting early intervention, open communication and a positive working environment.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Highley Parish Council
- The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
- Casual staff and fixed-term employees

It does **not** apply to:

- Councillors (covered by the Code of Conduct)
- Contractors or volunteers (issues handled through contract management or informal processes)

# PART A – DISCIPLINARY POLICY

## 3. Standards of Conduct

Employees are expected to:

- Perform their duties to a satisfactory standard
- Follow Council policies and procedures
- Treat colleagues, councillors and the public with dignity and respect
- Maintain confidentiality
- Uphold the Council's values and reputation

Misconduct or poor performance will be addressed through this policy.

## 4. Informal Resolution

Where possible, concerns will be addressed informally through:

- A quiet word
- Coaching or additional support
- Clarification of expectations
- Mediation (where appropriate)

Informal action will be recorded but does not form part of the formal disciplinary record.

## 5. Formal Disciplinary Procedure

### 5.1 Investigation

If informal action is inappropriate or unsuccessful, the Council will appoint an **Investigating Officer** to gather facts. The employee will be informed of the investigation and may be asked to attend an investigatory meeting.

Suspension may be considered **only where necessary**, for example:

- To protect individuals
- To protect evidence
- Where the alleged misconduct is serious

Suspension is **not a disciplinary sanction** and will be on full pay.

## 5.2 Disciplinary Hearing

If there is a case to answer, the employee will be invited to a disciplinary hearing before a **panel of councillors** (excluding anyone involved in the investigation).

The employee will receive:

- Written notice of the allegations
- Copies of evidence
- At least **5 working days' notice** of the hearing
- The right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative

## 5.3 Possible Outcomes

After considering the evidence, the panel may decide:

- No action
- Informal warning
- **Written Warning** (valid for 12 months)
- **Final Written Warning** (valid for 18 months)
- **Dismissal** (with notice)
- **Summary dismissal** (gross misconduct only, without notice)

## 6. Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour so serious that it destroys trust and confidence. Examples include:

- Theft, fraud or dishonesty
- Physical violence or threats
- Serious bullying or harassment
- Serious breach of confidentiality
- Deliberate damage to Council property
- Serious breach of health and safety
- Discrimination or hate-based behaviour
- Serious insubordination
- Criminal behaviour affecting employment

This list is not exhaustive.

## 7. Right of Appeal

Employees may appeal any disciplinary outcome within **10 working days** of receiving the decision.

Appeals will be heard by councillors not previously involved in the case. The appeal decision is final.

# PART B – GRIEVANCE POLICY

## 8. Purpose of the Grievance Procedure

Employees may raise concerns about:

- Working conditions
- Treatment by colleagues or councillors
- Workload or duties
- Policies or procedures
- Bullying or harassment
- Health and safety
- Any matter affecting their employment

Concerns relating to **bullying or harassment** may also be raised under the **Dignity at Work Policy**.

## 9. Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns informally with:

- Their line manager
- The Clerk
- The Chair of the Council (if the concern relates to the Clerk)

Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion.

## 10. Formal Grievance Procedure

### 10.1 Submitting a Grievance

A formal grievance must be submitted in writing, setting out:

- The nature of the complaint
- Relevant facts and dates
- Any informal steps already taken
- The outcome sought

Grievances about the Clerk must be submitted to the **Chair of the Council**.

### 10.2 Grievance Meeting

A grievance meeting will be arranged within **10 working days**. The employee has the right to be accompanied.

The Council will:

- Listen carefully
- Ask clarifying questions
- Consider all evidence
- Seek further information if required

### 10.3 Outcome

The employee will receive a written outcome, normally within **10 working days** of the meeting.

Possible outcomes include:

- Grievance upheld
- Grievance partially upheld
- Grievance not upheld
- Recommendations for action
- Mediation
- Training or support
- Review of policies or procedures

## 11. Appeals

Employees may appeal the grievance outcome within **10 working days**.

An appeal meeting will be held with councillors not previously involved. The appeal decision is final.

## 12. Overlapping Grievance and Disciplinary Cases

If an employee raises a grievance during disciplinary proceedings, the Council may:

- Pause the disciplinary process to consider the grievance, or
- Address both matters together if they are closely related

## 13. Confidentiality

All matters will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared on a **need-to-know basis**.

Victimisation of any person raising or supporting a grievance will not be tolerated.

## 14. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually at the Annual Council Meeting
- Following changes in legislation
- After any significant case that highlights a need for revision

## 15. Adoption

This Discipline & Grievance Policy is adopted by Highley Parish Council on:

**12 May 2026** at the **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**.