

Uffculme Parish Council
Minutes of meeting held
Monday 6th July 2026 at Ashill Village Hall

Meeting Open – 19:02

26.07.01 Apologies for absence

Chairman: Phil Cornish

Present: R Kingdom T Edwards P Blackman
Peter Cornish G Strawbridge M Bodger K Poynton

Apologies S Horne P Hallchurch

26.07.02 To approve of the Minutes of Meeting held on 1st June 2026

The minutes were agreed as an official council record.

(Councillor Poynton arrived after this item)

Public Session

There were 3 members of the public present, representing their concerns with the recently published MDDC Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment lists. It was explained by the Clerk that these lists are purely an assessment of sites that were identified as available for consideration as part of the call for sites, which are to be considered for inclusion as part of the emerging MDDC Local Plan. This assessment details the discussions that have taken place regarding each site that has been put forward, and any planning proposals will be consulted on in the usual manner. Members of the public will have the opportunity to feedback on sites that are deemed as acceptable for inclusion in the Local Plan when the time comes for consultation.

26.07.03 County Councillor's Report

Councillor Clist did not provide a written report ahead of time and was not in attendance.

26.07.04 District Councillors' Reports

The Lower Culm Ward Councillors provided a written report ahead of time (appended) and were not in attendance. No questions were raised in respect of the report.

Councillors Bradshaw and Clist did not provide a written report ahead of time and were not in attendance.

26.07.05 Parish Council Vacancies

The Clerk advised that there are currently 2 live vacancies, with another vacancy emerging, subject to following the usual process. An application to become a councillor was received and precis provided (appended). Co-option of this candidate was Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Phil Cornish. All in agreement.

26.07.06 Finance

26.07.06.01 To approve May Financial Statement

The May financial statement was provided for approval (appended). Accepted as official council minutes. All in agreement.

26.07.06.02 To approve June Financial Statement

The June financial statement was provided for approval (appended). Accepted as official council minutes. All in agreement.

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26.07.06.03 To confirm Exercise of Public Rights Dates

The Clerk advised the Public Rights Dates for 2025/2026 were announced on 29th June 2026, commencing on 1st July 2026 and ending on 11th August 2026.

26.07.06.04 To receive Internal Auditor Report 2026 (AGAR and Report)

The Internal Auditor's Report 2026 was received as a report by the Council (appended). Accepted as official council minutes. All in agreement.

26.07.06.05 Clerk's Expenses

Clerk's expenses to be delegated to Chair and Vice Chair for approval when prepared Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Bodger, all in agreement.

26.07.06.06 Draft Dignity at Work Policy for adoption

Draft policy discussed (appended). Adoption Proposed by Councillor Kingdom, this was not moved. Non-adoption Proposed by Councillor Strawbridge, this was not moved. Defer until a later dated meeting, to allow for full review of the documents by Members Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Poynton, all in agreement. Clerk to arrange for an Extra Ordinary Meeting to bring these documents back to Council.

26.07.06.07 Draft Disciplinary Policy for adoption

Draft policy discussed (appended). Adoption Proposed by Councillor Kingdom, this was not moved. Non-adoption Proposed by Councillor Strawbridge, this was not moved. Defer until a later dated meeting, to allow for full review of the documents by Members Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Poynton, all in agreement. Clerk to arrange for an Extra Ordinary Meeting to bring these documents back to Council.

26.07.06.08 Draft Grievance Policy for adoption

Draft policy discussed (appended). Adoption Proposed by Councillor Kingdom, this was not moved. Non-adoption Proposed by Councillor Strawbridge, this was not moved. Defer until a later dated meeting, to allow for full review of the documents by Members Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Poynton, all in agreement. Clerk to arrange for an Extra Ordinary Meeting to bring these documents back to Council.

26.07.06.09 Draft Equality and Diversity Policy for adoption

Draft policy discussed (appended). Adoption Proposed by Councillor Kingdom, this was not moved. Non-adoption Proposed by Councillor Strawbridge, this was not moved. Defer until a later dated meeting, to allow for full review of the documents by Members Proposed by Councillor Edwards, Seconded by Councillor Poynton, all in agreement. Clerk to arrange for an Extra Ordinary Meeting to bring these documents back to Council.

26.07.07 Business Arising

26.07.07.01 Hillhead/Broadpath

No updates were provided.

26.07.07.02 Mole Valley Feed Mill

No updates were provided. The next meeting is due to take place in November.

26.07.07.03 Uffculme Men's Club

No updates were provided.

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26.07.07.04 Uffculme Bowling Club

The Clerk advised that there is one more Councillor needed to sign the lease document and Clerk will arrange. It was advised that there are no concerns raised by the Bowling Club and that the next meeting is due to take place on 17/07. It was also raised that there is some new signage required alongside the Highways. Sally to contact the Clerk to discuss further and for additional contact to take place with the NHO.

26.07.07.05 Green Team

Councillor Kingdom advised that the Library of Things was going very well, and that the Café is equally well attended when open on a Friday and Saturday.

26.07.07.06 Allotments

No updates were provided.

26.07.07.07 Parish Maintenance Update

- A question was raised as to whether it would help the reinstatement of a Post Office if more people wrote to Royal Mail to raise the issue. The answer is yes!
- Highways – white lines at Church. It was raised whether we can have cones in the meantime. Clerk to raise with NHO to gain the answer to this question.
- Uffculme Down (UUC) raise complaints regarding motorbikes being ridden on this land. Signage is being considered. Clerk advised for this to be raised directly, via email or phone, to enable discussions with DCC, as part of the P3 grant (as a public footpath) or alternative means.

26.07.07.08 Traffic and Speeding Issues/Community Speed Watch

It was advised that there was a speed camera in the village today. Traffic Group next meeting is due to take place on 15th September. These meetings discuss both the Uffculme Straight and traffic issues in general. 20MPH signs chased with handyman and dates for installation awaited. The online course is still to be undertaken by Councillor Edwards, in order to be able to move forward with being involved in the Community Speed Watch.

26.07.07.09 Schools Update

No updates were provided.

26.07.07.10 Uffculme Village Hall

Repairs have been carried out recently. The current committee size is good and bookings are doing well. Broadband needs to be arranged – Clerk suggested Airband as free for Community Halls. The next meeting is due to take place in 3 weeks' time.

26.07.07.11 Magelake Committee / Repairs

No updates were provided. Clerk advised that the charity is now up and running and that we need to assess whether the Council becomes a sole trustee or whether the articles of association need to be revised to show current community groups, as the existing ones are now mostly outdated. The Council concluded that revised community groups would be preferable and Clerk to continue in this process.

26.07.07.12 Youth Working Group

No updates were provided.

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26.07.07.13 Community Crisis (previously Ukrainian Crisis)

No updates were provided. Discussions are still ongoing with MP and Westminster.

26.07.07.14 Play Areas

The Clerk advised that signage was on order for the equipment at Highland Terrace. Pathfields consultation still to take place.

26.07.07.15 Community Road Warden Scheme

2.6 tonnes of tarmac have been used on potholes since the start of the scheme. There is a slight lull at the moment, with more to be filled in the near future, after the holiday season.

26.07.08 Police Report

No updates were provided. Communication and handover has taken place with previous Cllr Logue to Cllr Strawbridge. Cllr Strawbridge is due to attend a Community Police Team shift booked on Friday. There is a new strategy by the Chief Constable, changing community focus to a Victims, Villains and Vulnerable focus.

26.07.09 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was delivered verbally, covering the below points:

- Highways Tracker
 - There was an updated tracker (appended).

26.07.10 Confidential Items

26.07.10.01 CCTV Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Meeting Close: 20:20

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 7th September 2026, subject to confirmation by the Clerk.

MDDC Report for July 2026

For regular updated news please follow

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/news-items/>

Could local council please email or call with any work they would like us to uptake.

County Council hosts LGR event for Towns and Parishes

On 22nd June, DCC and the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) facilitated a workshop for Devon's larger towns and parishes on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This was to ensure that information on the timeline and process is being shared widely and that the strong relationship with local councils and their communities is championed as we move through the process of LGR. Mid Devon has previously run its own well-attended sessions for its towns and parishes, and the value of these is in both strengthening those individual relationships, as well as ensuring towns and parishes have full visibility on the various steps in the fairly complex journey moving forward. While some immediate attention has been on the consideration of specific community assets, there is also a desire from local councils to look forward and shape what area-based and community decision-making feels like in the future. Everyone knows the journey ahead will have its challenges, however the message in the room was clear that these will be better faced, and more easily overcome, by working together across all levels of local government to ensure that LGR delivers the best possible outcomes for our communities.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Published

Mid Devon District Council has published its latest Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), an important evidence document that will help inform preparation of the new Local Plan, *Plan Mid Devon*.

The HELAA assesses land that has been submitted to the Council by landowners, developers and other interested parties through the 2021 and 2025 'Call for Sites' exercises. It considers whether sites may be suitable, available and achievable for housing, employment, renewable energy or habitat creation.

It is important to note that inclusion of a site in the HELAA does not mean that planning permission will be granted, nor does it mean that a site will necessarily be allocated for development in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, the assessment provides technical evidence to help the Council understand the potential supply of land available to meet future development needs.

The HELAA will now form part of the evidence base for Plan Mid Devon, assisting the Council in deciding which sites should be taken forward for further consideration and public consultation as the new Local Plan is prepared.

Parish councils may wish to review sites within their areas and consider any implications for housing, employment, infrastructure, environmental protection and community facilities as the Local Plan process progresses.

Further information:

- HELAA: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/planning-policy/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>
- Plan Mid Devon: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/plan-mid-devon-council-launches-new-local-plan/>
- Let's Talk Mid Devon: <https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/>

Plan Mid Devon Consultation Now Underway

Mid Devon District Council has launched work on a new **Local Plan**, which will guide how the district develops over the next 20 years. The plan will identify land for new homes, jobs, infrastructure and community facilities, while also considering environmental protection and the response to climate change.

The new plan is being prepared under updated Government requirements which require councils to complete Local Plans within a 30-month timeframe. The Council formally commenced work on **26 May 2026** and has opened an initial **scoping consultation**, inviting residents, businesses, community groups and parish councils to help shape the plan from the outset.

The consultation seeks views on the key issues facing Mid Devon, what the new Local Plan should cover, and how people would like to be kept informed as the process progresses. A further consultation on draft policies, evidence and potential site options is expected in early 2027, followed by consultation on the full draft plan in early 2028. Subject to examination by a Planning Inspector, adoption is anticipated in spring 2029.

The current consultation remains open until **5pm on Friday 10 July 2026**. Parish councils and residents are encouraged to take part and ensure local priorities are reflected in the emerging plan.

For further information and to participate in the consultation, visit:

- 🔗 <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/plan-mid-devon-council-launches-new-local-plan/>
- 🔗 <https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, comments can be submitted by email to:

planmiddevon@middevon.gov.uk.

What can parish councils do?

Parish councils are encouraged to take part in the current Plan Mid Devon consultation and help shape the district's future development strategy. This early stage consultation provides an opportunity to raise local priorities, identify infrastructure needs, highlight environmental concerns and ensure that the views of local communities are considered

before draft policies and potential development sites are prepared. Parish councils can also encourage residents to participate in the consultation process.

New Pitch Ready for Cullompton Cricket Season

Cullompton Cricket Club will begin the 2026 season at its new Horn Road ground, with the wicket and outfield now fully established and ready for play. Built to modern ECB standards, the facility includes improved drainage and irrigation systems, with temporary clubhouse and changing facilities already in place and permanent facilities due in 2027. **The new ground forms part of the wider Cullompton Relief Road project** and represents a significant investment in community infrastructure. Alongside the transport benefits of the relief road, the facility provides a long-term asset for local sport, supporting health and wellbeing, increasing opportunities for participation and helping to secure the future of cricket in the town.

Grand Western Canal Retains Five-Star Award

The Grand Western Canal Country Park has retained its prestigious **five-star Pride in Parks Award** from the Royal Horticultural Society's South West in Bloom scheme for the second year running. Judges highlighted the quality of the Canal Visitor Centre, recent towpath improvements and the contribution of volunteers working alongside the Canal Ranger Service.

The award recognises the high standards of maintenance, conservation and visitor experience provided at one of Mid Devon's most valued natural and heritage assets. Stretching more than 11 miles through the district, the canal continues to attract residents and visitors for recreation, wildlife and tourism.

Why it matters: The award is recognition of the dedication of staff and volunteers and helps raise the profile of one of Mid Devon's premier visitor attractions, bringing environmental, community and economic benefits to the district.

Bin It 123 – Mid Devon Among England's Best for Recycling

Mid Devon continues to be one of the highest-performing councils in England for waste and recycling. Latest national figures show the district ranks 6th lowest out of 197 collection authorities for residual household waste and 10th highest for recycling rates, placing Mid Devon among the country's top-performing councils.

A programme of service improvements is planned over the coming year to help residents recycle more and reduce waste. Recent changes include accepting metal baking trays in household recycling collections, while future initiatives will include trials of soft plastic collections, additional recycling containers and food waste caddies.

Working with Devon County Council, Mid Devon will also launch the **Monster Bins Project** in primary schools from September 2026, using assemblies and educational activities to encourage food waste recycling among younger residents and their families.

Town and parish councils may also be interested in upcoming tours of the waste depot, where members can learn more about recent service developments and new collection technologies.

Why it matters: High recycling rates reduce disposal costs, support environmental objectives and help keep Mid Devon among the best-performing districts in the country. The planned improvements aim to make recycling easier for residents while increasing participation across the district.

New Mid Devon Residents' App Launched

Mid Devon District Council has launched a new free residents' app, giving people easier access to council services from their smartphones. Residents can report issues, contact councillors, receive waste collection reminders, read council news, check planning applications and access local service information. [\[middevon.gov.uk\]](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

The app is designed to make it easier for residents to access services, receive important updates and stay connected with the Council.

Download: www.middevon.gov.uk/app [\[middevon.gov.uk\]](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

Why it matters: The app provides a simple, accessible way for residents to engage with council services, receive timely information and report issues while reducing reliance on phone calls and paper communications.

Apprenticeships Supporting Skills and Careers at Mid Devon

Mid Devon District Council currently supports **17 apprenticeships** across a range of services. These include both traditional apprentices and existing employees who are undertaking apprenticeship qualifications alongside their day-to-day roles.

The apprenticeships are delivered through **eight different training providers** and cover a diverse range of subjects including plumbing, procurement, housing management and environmental health.

The Council has a strong track record of apprentices progressing into permanent roles, helping to develop local skills and build a talented workforce for the future.

Why it matters: Apprenticeships provide valuable career opportunities for local people while helping the Council attract, develop and retain skilled staff in key service areas.

Anyone interested in future opportunities with the Council can sign up for job alerts via the Council's recruitment notification service.

Strategic Sustainability Grants Launched

Mid Devon District Council has launched a new **Strategic Sustainability Grants (SSG) scheme** to support community organisations delivering local action on sustainability, climate change and nature recovery. The programme will provide seed and core funding to help community groups strengthen partnerships, build resilience and

deliver practical environmental projects. A total of **£80,000** has been allocated to the scheme over the next two financial years. [\[middevon.gov.uk\]](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

The scheme offers new funding opportunities for local organisations to develop projects that support climate action, biodiversity and environmental sustainability across Mid Devon. [\[middevon.gov.uk\]](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

Further information: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/new-strategic-sustainability-grants-to-support-community-climate-and-nature-action/> [\[middevon.gov.uk\]](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

Cllr Cathy Connor and Cllr Gwen DuChesne

4th July 2026

From: Aaron [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 June 2026 20:38
To: clerk@uffculmeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Subject: New Councillor Enquiry - Aaron [REDACTED]

Dear my local councillors,

I want to help within my local area. I have 3 children in local schools, one in the secondary and two in the primary school and live in Pippins field in Uffculme. I have lived here for two years now, me, my wife of ten years and children love the area.

I have several skills in organising and sales craft that may be of use to Uffculme and would love the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the vacancy you have.

I have no previous experience in a councillor role, but having a professional job working as the general sales manager of [REDACTED] I really feel my skills could be an asset to the local community. I [REDACTED] feel perhaps this may be a positive not a negative in coming at problems and tasks with a different view. My everyday skills of working and managing, driving and developing young adults could really cross over into helping Uffculme get what Uffculme community needs to thrive. Plus as a father of three I am use to stressful situations and love the madness it can produce.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kindest regards,

Aaron Preston

[REDACTED]

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Uffculme Parish Council

06 July 2026 (2026 - 2027)

PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
13	Clerk's Salary	05/05/2026		Treasurers Account	Wages - May	Payment - Clerk's Wages	Gemma Cole	Z	-1,000.00		-1,000.00
14	Grass Cutting Contract	06/05/2026		Treasurers Account	April Uplift	Payment - Grass Cutting Contr	Jess Lucas	Z	-43.75		-43.75
15	Clerk's Salary	06/05/2026		Treasurers Account	00316 - Pension C	Payment - Clerk's Wages	Devon County Council	Z	-336.65		-336.65
16	Admin Expenses - website, emi	07/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Admin Expenses - P	Bright SG Ltd	S	-84.00	-16.80	-100.80
5	Interest Receivable - Premier I	11/05/2026		Commercial Instant		Receipt - Bank Interest	Lloyds Bank	Z	83.28		83.28
17	Clerk's Salary	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account	Wages - May(Top	Payment - Clerk's Wages	Gemma Cole	Z	-76.97		-76.97
18	Community Fund (including £2.	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Grant - Community	South West Dance Hub	Z	-480.00		-480.00
21	Admin Expenses - PPS, Payroll,	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Scribe - Accounts Sy	STARBOARD SYSTEMS	S	-817.00	-163.40	-980.40
23	Street Cleaning	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Street Scene - Bins	Jess Lucas	Z	-125.00		-125.00
25	Green Team - Fridge Hire	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Green Team - Fridge	Pickerings	S	-97.02	-19.40	-116.42
24	Repairs & Renewals - General i	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Public Toilet Cleanin	Bubbles Exterior Cleaning	Z	-195.00		-195.00
37	Magelake - External Maintenanc	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Magelake - Ground I	Countrywide Grounds Main	S	-110.28	-22.06	-132.34
22	Magelake - General Maintenanc	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Magelake - Water	South West Water Busines	Z	-572.54		-572.54
20	Community Fund (including £2.	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Grant - Community	The Uffculme Trust	Z	-1,902.00		-1,902.00
19	EMR Mens Club	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Grant - Men's Club F	Uffculme Men's Club	Z	-2,496.00		-2,496.00
44	Admin Expenses - PPS, Payroll,	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Scribe - Accounts Sy	STARBOARD SYSTEMS	S	-76.00	-15.20	-91.20
43	Admin Expenses - Training, Cle	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - DALC Renewal	Devon Association of Loca	X	-864.00	-119.98	-983.98
39	Street Cleaning	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Street Scene - Litter	Belinda Martin	Z	-378.00		-378.00
40	Street Cleaning	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Trade Waste	Mid Devon District Council	Z	-141.36		-141.36
41	Magelake - External Maintenanc	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Magelake - Ground I	Countrywide Grounds Main	S	-110.28	-22.06	-132.34
38	Magelake - External Maintenanc	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Magelake - Spectatc	Countrywide Grounds Main	S	-99.47	-19.89	-119.36
42	Magelake - General Maintenanc	18/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Magelake - Fire Syst	Tamar Security	S	-82.50	-16.50	-99.00
45	Sundry Exp	20/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Annual Parish Meeti	Alana's Cakes	Z	-130.00		-130.00
46	Sundry Exp	20/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Annual Parish Meeti	Country Bumpkin Catering	S	-116.67	-23.33	-140.00
47	Clerk's Expenses - Telephone, i	26/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Clerk's Phone	Tamar Telecommunication	S	-12.50	-2.50	-15.00
48	Grass Cutting Contract	27/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Grass Cutting Contr	Jess Lucas	Z	-1,756.25		-1,756.25
4	Magelake - External Maintenanc	29/05/2026		Treasurers Account	Overcharge Refund	Receipt - Magelake - Ground M	Countrywide Grounds Main	S	931.99	186.40	1,118.39
49	Admin Expenses - PPS, Payroll,	29/05/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Bank Service Charge	Lloyds Bank	Z	-4.25		-4.25
Total									-11,092.22	-254.72	-11,346.94

Uffculme Parish Council

06 July 2026 (2026 - 2027)

PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS LIST

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
50	Clerk's Salary	01/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Clerk's Wages	Gemma Cole	Z	-1,000.00		-1,000.00
26	EMR Playground Maintenance/i	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Maintenance - Playp	Alvian Ltd	S	-630.00	-126.00	-756.00
27	Admin Expenses - Training, Cle	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Membership - SLCC	SLCC	Z	-158.00		-158.00
29	Street Cleaning	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Street Scene - Bins	Jess Lucas	Z	-100.00		-100.00
31	Cemetery - General works, Wal	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Cemetery - Water	South West Water Busines	Z	-47.92		-47.92
30	Maintenance budget (Commerc	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Public Toilet Cleanin	Bubbles Exterior Cleaning	Z	-195.00		-195.00
28	Allotments - 50% lease cost 20	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Allotment Subs	Uffculme Allotment Associa	Z	-1,800.00		-1,800.00
33	Admin Expenses - website, em	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Website Domain	Cloud Next Limited	S	-50.00	-10.00	-60.00
32	EMR Playground Maintenance/i	03/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Highland Terrace - F	Creative Play (UK) Limited	S	-33,749.99	-6,750.00	-40,499.99
54	Clerk's Salary	05/06/2026		Treasurers Account	Pension - June	Payment - Admin Expenses - P	Devon County Council	Z	-336.65		-336.65
6	Interest Receivable - Premier I	09/06/2026		Commercial Instant /		Receipt - Bank Interest	Lloyds Bank	Z	74.60		74.60
34	Clerk's Salary	13/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Clerk's Wages	Gemma Cole	Z	-76.97		-76.97
36	Admin Expenses - Insurances	13/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Insurance	Clear Councils	Z	-2,692.00		-2,692.00
35	Playground Maintenance	13/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Maintenance - Playp	REUMS	Z	-150.00		-150.00
51	Clerk's Expenses - Telephone, i	24/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Clerk's Phone	Tamar Telecommunication	S	-12.50	-2.50	-15.00
52	Grass Cutting Contract	29/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Grass Cutting Contr	Jess Lucas	Z	-1,756.25		-1,756.25
53	Admin Expenses - PPS, Payroll,	29/06/2026		Treasurers Account		Payment - Bank Service Charge	Lloyds Bank	Z	-4.25		-4.25
Total									-42,684.93	-6,888.50	-49,573.43

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Uffculme Parish Council

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes ✓	No 	Not applicable

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

18/06/2026

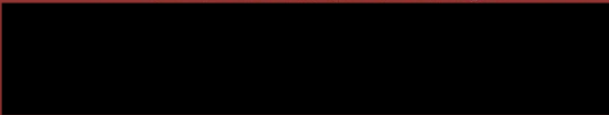
Parish & Town Auditing Services

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date 18/06/2026

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).



Gemma Cole
Clerk/RFO
Uffculme Parish Council



18th June 2026

Dear Gemma,

INTERNAL AUDIT 2026

Parish & Town Auditing Services have been appointed to undertake the internal audits at Uffculme Parish Council. The annual internal audit for 2025/26 financial year was completed on 18th June 2026.

I can confirm that I am independent of the Parish Council.

As stated in the Letter of Engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete the internal audit section of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year. In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements. This will be undertaken by the Council's appointed External Auditor.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These controls are included in the following report.

Thank you for all the information you have provided to enable the audit to be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Russell, Internal Auditor

INTERNAL AUDIT

Outlined below is an overview of the 10 Assertions within the Practitioners Guide 2025. Each of these are dealt with under the relevant Governance sections contained in Section 1 of the AGAR:

AGS Assertion 1 — Financial management and preparation of accounts

- Accounting Records and supporting documents:
- Bank reconciliation:
- Budget setting:
- Investments:
- Reserves:
- General Reserves:
- Earmarked and other reserves:

AGS Assertion 2 — Internal control

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:
- Safe and efficient arrangements to safeguard public money:
- Employment:
- VAT
- Fixed assets and equipment:
- Loans and long-term liabilities:

AGS Assertion 3 — Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

- Acting with its powers:

AGS Assertion 4 — Exercise of public rights

AGS Assertion 5 — Risk management

AGS Assertion 6 — Internal audit

AGS Assertion 7 — Reports from auditors

AGS Assertion 8 — Significant events

AGS Assertion 9 — Trust funds (local councils only)

AGS Assertion 10 — Digital and data compliance

The following headings are based on Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

The Parish Clerk has been appointed as the RFO (LGA1972 s151). **Recommend that this role be added to the Clerk's details on the website**

The roll over figure from the 2024/25 financial year is £126,331.55 (Box 7).

The Council maintains its accounts using an excel spreadsheet. A sample of the financial transactions between 1st April and 31st March 2026 has been undertaken. The following checks were carried out:

- A review of the cashbook against the bank statements and invoices paid;
- A sample of Payments have been checked against the bank statements to verify accuracy;
- Expenditure incurred is appropriate.

There is a proper process in place to ensure that financial information is correctly recorded and reported to Council as part of its governance procedures. Procedures are included in the Financial Regulations.

A list of invoices for payment is presented to Full Council for payment as part of the agenda. Approvals are minuted in the Council minutes and payment is via online banking. The monthly list is published on the website.

The Council has a Financial Risk assessment in place. [Microsoft Word - Risk Register Draft](#)

Bank reconciliations are prepared on a monthly basis, presented to Full Council as part of the financial papers and signed off by Council.

There is appropriate segregation in place and a robust process to enable the detection and identification of potential fraud.

The year end bank reconciliation has been completed. This was referenced back to the bank statements. The final balance held by the Council amounts to £102,780.58 as at 31st March 2026.

The Council has had balances of over £100,000 for consecutive years and does require an Investment Policy. **It is recommended that an investment policy is developed and adopted during the 2026/27 financial year.**

The Council has met this control objective.

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Tenders and Contracts are governed by Financial Regulations. All contracts being tendered should be published on the Parish Council's website as well as the Find a

Tender portal where required. The Council has not tendered for any works this financial year.

Both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are based on the latest NALC template and reflect recent legislative changes.

The limits between the two documents are consistent.

The invoices procedure is as follows:

- On receipt reviewed for accuracy;
- Invoices are printed out and filed;
- Payment schedule presented at each meeting for approval;
- Payments ratified at each meeting;
- The RFO uploads the payments in the banking app and approves.

There is appropriate segregation in place.

VAT should normally be claimed annually but there is no evidence that a VAT claim for 2024/25 was submitted. No VAT claim information has been provided for the current year.

It is recommended that Council submits a VAT claim as soon as possible. Claims can be made for the previous 3 years and should be submitted on a VAT Form 126. [Claim a VAT refund as an organisation not registered for VAT - GOV.UK](#)

The Council has met this control objective.

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

The Council has a Risk Management Strategy in place and should be reviewed on an annual basis. **Recommend that a review of the Risk Management Strategy in place is undertaken during the year and recorded in the minutes.**

An Asset Register is in place and has been updated. The asset register is maintained on a spreadsheet. Value of assets stated on the 2024/25 AGAR on the website amounted to £749,381.

The Council is insured through Clear Councils. Policy number LCO01599. Cover period: 1st June 2025 to 31st May 2026. Cover includes Employer's Liability (£10 million), Public & Products Liability (£10 million) and a Fidelity Guarantee of £250k.

A review of the insurance policy has been undertaken and Council is adequately insured.

The Council is responsible for a number of play areas including Ashill, Pippins Field, Culm Valley Way, Pathfields and Highland Terrace which includes the skate park. The Council carries out an annual independent inspection of the play area and also monthly inspections which are recorded and actioned as required.

The Council has adequate internal controls in place to ensure that it carries out its day-to-day business effectively and efficiently.

Recommend that an Internal Controls policy be developed and adopted.

The Council has met this control objective.

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

At its meeting held on 13th January 2025 Full Council formally approved the budget and the setting of a precept. (Minute 25.01.06.03)

25.01.06.03 Precept 2025-2026 The precept for 2025-2026, at a value of £103,836.49, to be requested from MDDC by the Clerk. Proposed by Councillor Logue, Seconded by Councillor Lane, all in agreement.

It has been confirmed that a precept of £103,836 was requested. (MHCLG Parish Code E1133P054)

Budget monitoring is undertaken during the year and during the budget setting period. The budget report is uploaded onto the website as part of the budget and precept review.

The Council has set up Earmarked Reserves and these are reviewed at budget setting time. Earmarked Reserves included in the 2025/26 budget of £47,036. The 2026/27 budget EMR allocation amounts to £106,574. The surplus will be funded from the 2026/27 precept.

The Council has an adequate General Reserve to meet the recommendations in place, with specific allocated EMRs also in place.

The Council had the following Bank Statement Balances as at 31st March 2026:

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT
Current A/C	£2,652.72
Reserve A/C	£100,127.86
TOTAL	£102,780.58

The Council has met this control objective.

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

The Council is a burial authority and is responsible for the management of the Cemetery. Income is properly recorded and reported to Council on a monthly basis. The Council did maintain its records using the Epitaph system but from 1st April 2026 is moving over to Scribe.

The Council has the following leases in place:

- Uffculme Bowling Club for the Bowling Green and premises. The amount payable per annum is £1. The lease was issued on 1st January 2016 for a period of 10 years and is due for renewal.

Council's other income for 2025/26 included bank interest, a Christmas grant and a parish paths grant. Income is correctly recorded in the accounts and reported to Full Council. There is an audit trail in place.

The Council has met this control objective.

F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

The Council does not operate a petty cash system and did not receive any cash payments during the financial year.

The Council has met this control objective.

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

The Clerk has a contract in place.

Members do not receive a members' allowance.

A sample of staff salaries has been checked and confirmed. Salaries paid during the year have been reviewed. Gross pay is calculated in accordance with the relevant NJC scale.

Tax codes are included on the payslips and deductions properly calculated.

Pay slips have been reviewed and it has been confirmed that tax is properly deducted.

Council is a member of the LGPS. Pension contributions have been made. The relevant minute is below:

25.07.06.06 Pension Scheme A report was received (appended). Approve recommendations contained within. Proposed by Councillor Kingdom, Seconded by Councillor Edwards, all in agreement. Clerk to enrol as of 1st August 2025.

Employer National Insurance contributions have been deducted.

A test sample was undertaken and it was confirmed that the correct net pay was paid to the employee with tax and NI contributions correctly deducted and paid to the respective agencies.

The Council has met this control objective.

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

An Asset Register is in place and has been reviewed. Asset purchase cost is recorded and additional information is included where appropriate. The asset value has been correctly recorded in box 9 of the AGAR. (£749,381)

A comparison of the insurance schedule against the asset register has been undertaken. Council has adequate insurance cover in place.

Council has one long-term investment in place and this is recorded on the Asset Register. (COIF - Charities Official Investment Fund - £1,640.)

Council has no loans in place.

The Council has met this control objective.

I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

Bank reconciliations are prepared monthly and are signed off by Full Council. Bank reconciliations are uploaded onto the website.

The Council has met this control objective.

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Accounts are maintained on a receipts and payments basis.

The Council has met this control objective.

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick “not covered”).

Not covered.

L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The following information should be published on the Parish Council's website under the Smaller Authorities Transparency Code ([SI/SR Template](#))

Expenditure exceeding £100

Local authorities must publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £100. [Published as part of the monthly accounts.](#)

End of year accounts

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

Annual governance statement

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

Internal audit report

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published](#)

List of councillor or member responsibilities

Annual publication of councillor or member responsibilities no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. [Published.](#)

Location of public land and building assets

Annual publication no later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates. Parish councils and port health authorities to publish details of all public land and building assets – either in its full asset and liabilities register or as an edited version. [Published](#)

Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings

Publication of draft minutes from all formal meetings not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. Publication of meeting agendas and associated meeting papers not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate is taking place. [Published](#)

The Council has met this control objective.

M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (*during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set*).

The publication requirements were met. The Notice states 30th June to 8th August 2025. This meets the statutory 30 day requirement.

The Council formally minute the public notice at the July meeting, Minute 25.07.06.02 refers. The AGAR was approved on 2nd June 2025, minutes 25.06.07.01 and 25.06.07.02 refers.

The Council has met this control objective.

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR.

Publication Requirements Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage: Before 1 July 2025 authorities must publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited: [Published](#)
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, approved and signed, page 4: [Published](#)
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25, approved and signed, page 5: [Published](#)

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report. [Published](#).

The Council has met this control objective.

O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.

Council has a .gov.uk domain registered for its website and email accounts. The Clerk and Councillors are provided with an official email. Council meets best practice advice by having a .gov.uk domain for its website and the Clerk's email.

The Council has adopted an IT policy.

The Council does not have an Accessibility Statement published on its website.
Recommend that an accessibility statement is developed and adopted and meets the WCAG2.2AA requirements.

Note that since September 2020, all parish and Parish councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). As from October 2024 that rating level changed from WCAG2.1 AA to WCAG2.2AA so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations.

It has been confirmed that Uffculme Parish Council website does comply with WCAG 2.2 AA but requires some improvement. It achieves 69% in the accessibility test: [Scan Results — CompliaScan](#)

Accessibility has been reviewed and the parish council section of the website scores 6.9 out of 10. [WAVE Report of Home | UPC](#)

Recommend that Council contacts its web provider to ensure it meets the above requirements.

Data Protection requirements:

- Data Protection Officer – Parish Clerk should be formally nominated as DPO
- Data Audit: A Data audit needs to be undertaken.

- Training for staff and Councillors: Needs to be undertaken
- Data Protection Policy: In place
- Data Retention Policy: Needs to be adopted
- Accessibility Statement: Needs to be adopted
- Privacy Policy: Needs to be adopted

Council will need to ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Undertake a data audit and present to Council for adoption
- Develop and adopt all the policies required that are outlined above
- Ensure that both hard copy and electronic data have relevant protections in place. For hard copy records this will be identified by the audit. For electronic data it is recommended that your IT provider outlines what protections are in place, how often data is backed up and how it is stored. Ensure that all computers have some level of virus protection.

A Freedom of Information Policy is in place.

The Council meets this control objective but needs to develop some additional policies.

P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

The Council is the sole trustee for the following charities:

War Memorial Recreation Ground (301000)

Income and expenditure

Data for financial year ending 31 March 2025

Total income: £5,984

Total expenditure: £5,984

Accounts and annual returns have been submitted on time. Accounts are maintained separately from the Council's accounts.

Magelake Hall and Recreation Ground (300999)

Income and expenditure

Data for financial year ending 31 December 2024

Total income: £25,891

Total expenditure: £25,987

Total income includes £25,891 from 1 government grant.

Accounts and annual returns have been submitted on time. Accounts are maintained separately from the Council's accounts.

TAR has also been uploaded.

The Council has met this control objective.

Item Number	Item	Location	what3words Location	Action	Phase
1	VAS Signs	Uffculme Village	///melon.month.bystander ///streetcar.figs.snored	VAS signs required within Uffculme Villge. Entrance from Commercial Road and also from Bridge Street. Please provide information and pricing to proceed with this. 06/10 - Site visit on 29/08/25 with highway technician to asses potential locations for VAS signs. 01/12 - in the hands of the tech. Locations proposed and awaiting update. Quotations to be received in due course. 30/06/26. SCARF mini review completed, two locations approved, Location 1 Bridge Street Denners Way side on grass verge, Location 2 Uffculme Rd junction of Bridwell Avenue west side junction verge.	Outstanding

2	Length Restriction HATOC request	Chapel Hill	from: ///grandson.guardian.screeches To: ///inclines.hatter.butternut	Information and evidence now collated from residents, detailing instances of damage due to long vehicles. To be proceeded through to HATOC 02/06 - NHO All noted, will put forward the case when the next HATOC submissions are requested Further instances of damage reported. All instances logged on internal tracker - with photo evidence to support HATOC request 06/10/25 NHO to investigate further as to what is needed to progress. Date of next meet TBC 03/11/25 Traffic engineer consulted. A mandatory length restriction is possible from the school towards the town. No DCC funding available however if funded we they are happy to start the process. This has all been submitted for consideration 01/12 - Traffic orders team in receipt of request - HATOC not required. Review due to take place, including this item (working list). 05/06/26 Chased traffic orders for a reply, still no answer.	Outstanding
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3	Keep Clear markings	Bridge Street	///universe.flamenco.easy	"Keep Clear" markings excessively worn outside St Mary's Church. Need to be repainted 02/06 - NHO Email sent to the traffic orders team. 01/12 - DYL to be put in place instead. Require Cllr Clist support to progress this (email confirmation required). 19/01/26 Proposal for change to double yellow lines submitted for consideration at HATOC	Outstanding
4	Yellow Lines	Square Corner	///sheepish.blossom.novelist	White hash markings excessively worn. Request to replace with double yellow lines. 02/06 - NHO Email sent to Cllr Simon Clyst to confirm he supports the change to the APM' 06/10 -Proposal submitted for consideration at HATOC 01/12 - Tranch 3 inclusion. Needs to be considered in 2026. White hash markings are on the list to be repainted in due course (in the meantime).	Outstanding

5	Disabled Bay	The Square, Uffculme	///sheepish.blossom.novelist	Location of the disabled bay promised to Uffculme to perhaps be sited outside Square Corner, as opposed to outside NISA (where there is one already) in order to overcome the issues of item 4 02/06 - NHO I cannot approve a disabled bay at the location as it would narrow the carriageway and cause issues for HGV's. I will submit an application for double yellow lines. UPC requested information as to whether this is in addition to or instead of the disabled bay in The Square. The disabled bay that is already in situ is good location - needs to be limited times for shop users and clearer markings Awaiting confirmation from the parish if an additional disabled space is required. 01/12 - Side by side disabled bays for The Square possible. Check whether markings will be carried out at the same time. NHO to arrange for additional space, with time restriction for the second space, as original space used primarily by resident and not users of shops. and Square Corner etc. 30/06/26 Email sent to the disabled parking team.	Outstanding
6	Give way markings	The Square, Uffculme	///zips.gourmet.apart	Excessively worn. To be repainted 02/06 - NHO Email sent to the traffic orders team. 01/12 - No update - parish remarking scheme.	Outstanding

7	Road Warden Information	Parish Wide	n/a	NHO to provide welcome pack and information on how to obtain equipment 19/05/25 - pack and info provided. Passed to Terry to coordinate with volunteers 02/06 - Information on how to order items is not present - referred back to NHO 11/08 - Details passed to Terry for how to request items from DCC	Completed
8	Give way markings on Crossroad	Ashill	///healthier.drizzly.capillary	Road markings have been repainted just to one side of the junction. The second side still remains outstanding. 02/06 - NHO Email sent to the traffic orders team 06/07/2025 - lines have now been painted. Officers to discuss signage after annual leave w/c 21/07 23/07 - signage to be reviewed in 6 months' time 01/12 - no update due.	Outstanding

9	Property Damage	Bridge Street	///hospitals.successor.digress	There have been multiple instances of property damage collated from residents in the section. It is believed due to large vehicles mounting the pavement, due to limited space to maneuver around the corner, in part due to parked cars outside of St Mary's Church and outside the front of The Square. Potential for a bollard to be installed to be investigated please, to protect buildings and to deter drivers from mounting "building protect" pavements. 02/06 - NHO to review when next in area 03/11/25. Traffic orders team contacted on 02/06 and again on 06/10 regarding the keep clear markings on Bridge Street, emphasising issues it is causing. A bollard is not an option, we do not install assets to protect property. 01/12 - confirmed that resident is not able to install own bollard. DCC will not install bollard either. It is hoped that updates to DYL outside of church will assist with this issue.	Outstanding
10	Give way markings on corner	Ashill	///goodnight.host.thudding	Excessively worn. To be repainted 02/06 - NHO Email sent to the traffic orders team. 01/12 - No update - parish remarking scheme.	Outstanding

11	Zig Zag markings	Uffculme Primary School	from ///highbrow.crashing.speedily to ///tallest.prongs.poetry	Request was raised previously to have the zig zag markings outside of the primary school extended, both sides of the road. Believed to have been signed off and awaiting markings. Can you please confirm? 02/06 - NHO Email sent to the traffic orders team. 07/07 - Consultation period 1st July until 22nd July 01/12 - allocated under this year's HATOC - implimented during 2026 planned. 30/06/26. Lines have been freshly remarked. The changes to the lines approved at HATOC tranche 2	Outstanding
12	Overgrown nettles and brambles	Chapel Hill Footpath	from ///anchorman.expansion.inefficient to ///factually.occurs.divided	The footpath to the secondary school is excessively overgrown with vegetation. Can you please arrange for this to be cleared? 02/06 - NHO This footpath is included in our grass/ verge cutting program so is scheduled to be cut back. 06/10 - NHO Attended to cut this back with colleagues on 14/08/25 however it had already been completed, possibly by	Completed

13	Slow down signs	Commercial Road	from ///worms.wooden.waking to ///backyards.succumbs.peroxide	Yellow signs from highways to be temporarily placed along Commercial Road to encourage slower speeds. NHO to investigate whether possible with team. 01/12 - unable to issue -need to be associated with roadworks. Perm signs can be possible to entrances to the village. Signs would need to be parish funded. Slow warning signs not allowed within 20 mph limit	Completed
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14	Local Waiting Restrictions Programme	Various		In 2022 the following submission was made: * Commercial Road - Bridwell entrance to Cold Harbour – to be in effect at all times, both sides of the road (due to areas of no pavement) * Commercial Road – Men’s Club to Markers Road – both sides - to be in effect at all times (in order to alleviate visibility issues, lack of pavement and to allow for free flow of traffic) * The Square, outside the Ostler and from the top of Bridge Street to outside Square Corner - to be in effect at all times (in order to alleviate visibility issues and to allow for free flow of traffic) * Ashley Road – from the Masonic Lodge gates to Clay Lane, to be in effect 08.00 - 09.30 and 15.00 - 16.30 (in order to alleviate issues surrounding school traffic and lack of pavement). 01/12 - NHO to investigate where we are with this. 19/01/26 None of these locations were officially submitted in 2022. I will have to draw up the proposal designs and get approval from Simon Clyst before they can	Outstanding
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15	Entrance to Grantlands	Commercial Road	from ///rush.charm.dolly to ///configure.delivers.longer	Reports from Residents stating that cars are parked too close to the opening to Grantlands, causing an obstruction to visibility. Is it possible to extend the protect markers to accommodate a wider visibility splay? 19.01.26 There are no enforceable access protection markers currently here. If you would like any then it would have to have a new submission. I am reluctant due to lack of parking and it will cause issues elsewhere with parking. 02/07/26 I have been made aware that residents of Grantlands are turning right out of the road to turn on to the main road. This is a contravention of the one way system and they must drive down to Coldharbour Mill and on to Russet Close.	Completed
16	Pippins Field	Pippins Field	from ///translate.exhaling.packing to ///aims.hatter.clutches	Surfacing issues - RWS leader assessed the road and have recommended NHO intervention and referral, due to the extent of the works needed. 19.01.26 There is no funding available for surface dressing here. It is on my list for potential dragon patching sites. 02/07/26 We have a new patching initiative called the Rapid Response Team. It allows us to patch larger areas that are getting a lot of attention to the parish. I have put forward the entrance to Pippins Field	Outstanding

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Uffculme Parish Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all Councillors, officers and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the Council.

Purpose

Uffculme Parish Council is committed to creating a working environment where all Council employees, Councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by Clerks and Councillors and all employees and volunteers engaged to work at Uffculme Parish Council. Should agency staff or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with Uffculme Parish Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, the Clerk or the Chair of the Council in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the Chair of the Council the complaint should be raised to the Clerk or Vice Chair.

Agency staff or contractors are equally expected to treat Council colleagues and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect and the Council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the Council's grievance policy.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, Councillor), however, the Council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, Councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and Council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Uffculme Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we

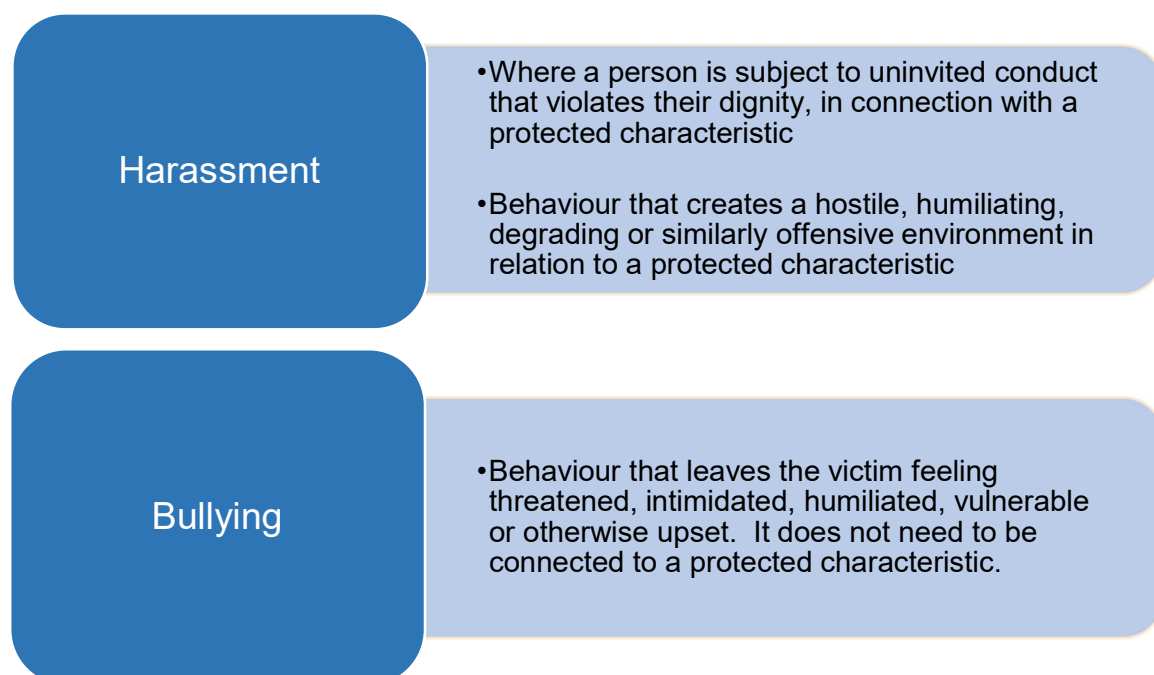
tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of the Council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, equality policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the Council's disciplinary procedure.



What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions, but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear, however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). See the Council's equality and diversity Policy.

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines, and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the Council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with the Clerk or the Chair of the Council. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a Councillor: If you are being bullied or harassed by a Councillor, please raise this with the Clerk or the Chair of the Council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The Council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying: If you witness such behaviour you should report the incident in confidence to the Clerk or Chair of the Council. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff or volunteer: If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague, volunteer or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below:

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the Council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the Clerk or Chair of the Council or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the Chair of the Council. (If your concern relates to the Chair, you should raise it with the Vice Chair of the Council). The Chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the Council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the Council's grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint to the Clerk or the Chair of the Council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The Clerk or the Chair of the Council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the grievance policy. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. The Council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the Councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The Council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the grievance policy for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the grievance procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the grievance procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

GUIDANCE FOR USING THE DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a Council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

This guidance is provided to support understanding of the policy, and its application, as well as where local adaptations may be required. The guidance is not part of the policy and should be removed from the policy adopted and shared with Council employees.

The Dignity at Work Policy will replace a previous 'Bullying and Harassment' Policy, to create a policy that is focussed on encompassing behaviours beyond simply bullying and harassment, and zero tolerance with the aim of dealing with concerns before they escalate. It is important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

Wording has been suggested to demonstrate a Council's commitment to promoting dignity and respect where they have signed up to the NALC, SLCC and OVW Civility and Respect Pledge. Council's that have not signed up to this are requested to consider making this pledge which is based on basic behaviours and expectations of all Council representatives to create workplaces that allow people to maintain their dignity at all times. If your Council has not agreed to the pledge this wording should be removed.

The policy is drafted with consideration of employment language and terminology that is reflective of a modern working environment, setting a tone that is engaging, collaborative and inclusive. A Council may want to update references where relevant to reflect local terminology and structure, however should be considerate of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The examples of bullying and harassment are just that – examples. This should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Notes:

Protected Characteristics

A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of any of the protected characteristics.

Discrimination includes treating people differently because of a protected characteristic. Employees can complain of harassment even if the behaviour in question is not directed at them. This is because the complainant does not actually need to possess the relevant protected characteristic. An employee can complain of unlawful harassment if they are related someone with a protected characteristic, or because a colleague believes they have a protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment related to a protected characteristic could include;

- Making assumptions about someone's ability due to their **age**, or denying development opportunities to someone based on their age. This could also include assumptions about their lifestyle or making inappropriate jokes related to age.
- Making fun or mimicking impairments related to a health condition, or using inappropriate language about disabilities. Constantly selecting social activities that make it impossible for a colleague with a **disability** to participate in.
- Refusing to treat a person as their new gender, or disclosing information about their gender identity could be harassment on the grounds of **gender reassignment**.
- **Pregnancy/Maternity** harassment could include refusing opportunities due to pregnancy or maternity leave, or inappropriate touching and invasion of personal space such as unwanted touching of a pregnant person's stomach.
- Harassment based on **race** could include derogatory nicknames, or stereotyping based on ethnicity. It could include racist comments or jokes, or assumptions about someone's lifestyle based on their ethnicity.
- **Gender** harassment could include not considering people for a job based on gender stereotyping roles, or implementing practices that disadvantage one gender over another. Rude, explicit jokes, even if not directed at an individual, or comments on individuals' dress or appearance.
- Regularly arranging team meals over periods of fasting or religious occasions or failing to adjust a dress code to accommodate religious dress could be examples of harassment based on **religion/belief**.
- Excluding same sex partners from social events could be both **sexual orientation** and **marriage/civil partnership** discrimination, as could not offering the same work-related benefits.

A person does not need to be employed or have 2 years qualifying service to make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

- Job applicants who believe they have not been appointed because of a 'protected characteristic' can make a claim.
- New or established employees who are dismissed, or treated unreasonably because of a health condition can make a discrimination claim.
- An employee subjected to harassment can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.
- An employee asked to retire can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

Legal risks

Successful unfair dismissal claims are limited to a compensation cap, whereas those for unlawful discrimination have no cap.

A positive employment culture, and swift action if conduct falls beneath acceptable standards will help mitigate the risks. An unhealthy culture will make it difficult to defend claims.

The time to defend and the cost of defending tribunal claims can be significant, irrespective of the outcome.

Culture and behaviour

We work in eclectic communities and working environments, and a positive culture within the Council enables employees with different backgrounds and beliefs to share ideas and shape how the Council achieves its objectives for their community.

It is important to recognise that different individuals may find different behaviours bullying or harassing so while there is not always intent to offend or cause harm, that does not mean that the effect of the behaviour has not caused harm or offence.

It can take people a period of time to decide to raise their concerns, as they worry about consequences (perhaps from peers by complaining about a colleague who is popular, or they fear victimisation from the perpetrator or others). The Council should consider whether there are opportunities (such as 121s to offer opportunity to reflect on relationships/morale) to identify issues earlier and address negative behaviours. Individuals can often mention concerns they are experiencing but not want to take it further. The Council should remind the complainant that it has a zero tolerance to bullying and harassment and remind them of the policy in place to address concerns. If the allegations mentioned are significant, the Council may want to suggest that it will need to investigate further, even if a 'grievance' is not raised, so as to ensure that any concerns and risks are managed, and the Council is meeting its responsibilities and duty of care as an employer.

Whilst both staff and Councillors jointly determine the working culture, Councillors are key in demonstrating what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. This is apparent from how Councillors behave with each other in Council meetings and also in how standards of behaviour are applied through the use of informal discussion and formal policies.

Scope

All Council representatives are expected to uphold the values of the Dignity at Work Policy, however this policy sets out how allegations from employees will be managed. As indicated in the policy, concerns from a contractor, agency worker etc. should be raised to the identified person, and an appropriate approach will be considered based on the situation and relationship of the complainant with the Council.

Likewise, concerns raised about the behaviour of a contractor or agency worker would not generally be managed via the full process (such as the disciplinary process) but appropriate action would be considered based on the situation. To treat people (such as contractors, or a casual worker) engaged by the Council the same as an employee could blur the status of the employment relationship, so consider seeking professional advice if needed.

Managers

Recognising that Councils are of varying sizes, where the term manager/nominated manager is used it is recognised this could be the Clerk/chief officer, another employee of the Council, or a Councillor depending on the situation. It is good practice to have a clearly identified person who is the responsible 'line manager' or equivalent contact for an employee so that there is clarity on how the employee should report concerns to, who they notify if they are sick or to request leave etc. More often for Council employees this may be the Clerk, and for the Clerk this could be the Chair/Vice Chair.

Bullying and harassment & performance management

The policy sets out that bullying and harassment does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. It is not uncommon for an employee, when receiving critical feedback, to claim that this is bullying and/or harassing. It is the role of the nominated manager to provide effective and constructive feedback to encourage performance at the required standard.

Even when the feedback is not positive it should be fair, communicated in a professional and reasonable manner and shared with the objective of aiding understanding and achieving an improvement to overcome the shortfalls. There is no absolute definition of when the feedback may not be appropriate. Often it will be for the person/panel hearing the dignity at work complaint/grievance to determine whether the performance management has upheld the standards expected in terms of respect and civility and any feedback has been shared in a fair and professional way.

Responsibilities

All staff and representatives of the Council are responsible for their own behaviour in the workplace and for taking steps to revise unacceptable behaviour and appropriately challenge that of others.

Leaders – Councillors, Clerks, managers - are responsible for ensuring that these standards of treating people with civility, respect and courtesy are upheld, both through their own example, and by communicating and promoting these expectations to all employees. They are also responsible for ensuring that concerns raised are treated seriously and addressed in line with this policy in a timely manner.

During the investigation

Employers have a duty of care to provide a safe place of work. If a complaint is made, discuss how to manage working relationships whilst the allegation is being investigated and until the outcome is disclosed. This is as much for the protection of the alleged perpetrator as for the aggrieved.

Consider whether a neutral person should be offered as a 'listening ear' for both parties in the investigation. This could be a Councillor or nominated manager who is not involved in the investigation or allegations and can be a point of check in as raising, or being subject to allegations can be stressful.

Offer other support that may be appropriate to the situation such as signposting to support groups, time off for counselling etc. If you have suspended a staff member, your duty of care continues and it is important to consider their wellbeing and mental health.

Ensure that you communicate regularly with both parties.

The investigation and any subsequent hearing should be completed in accordance with the grievance policy which sets out a process for dealing with concerns. You should ensure that the grievance policy adopted adheres to any local policies and procedures, with consideration of any timescales and escalation routes in your locally adopted policy.

Confidentiality

It may be possible for concerns to be raised with the perpetrator without disclosing the name of the complainant however in a small Council it is likely that it will be clear that the accused will know where the accusation has come from. The Council representative (Clerk/Councillor) speaking to the alleged perpetrator must be clear that the discussion is confidential and the individual would be at risk of formal disciplinary action if there is any sort of victimisation or retaliation for the individual raising their concern.

During any formal investigation it may be necessary to disclose the nature of the allegations and where they came from to ensure a fair and balanced investigation and process. This should be discussed with the person raising the concerns to understand any issues and how they may be mitigated. In some situations it may be appropriate to provide anonymised witness statements however this would be a last resort, and could compromise the fairness of the process. Where there is a genuine fear of consequences and this may need to be considered, it is recommended that professional advice is sought. For the same reason it can be difficult for a Council to consider an anonymous complaint, however if the concerns are significant and compromise the Council in their duty of care to employees, then consideration of how to deal with the matter may be required.

Victimisation

All employees have the right to raise genuine concerns without the fear of reprisals. If the aggrieved (or a witness) is treated differently / less favourably because they have raised a complaint, then this is victimisation. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint, cancelling a planned training event, or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload. Victimisation can lead to a claim to an employment tribunal.

False allegations

If an employee makes an allegation that they know to be untrue, or gives evidence that they know to be untrue, the Council should consider the matter under the disciplinary procedure. Such an allegation would be potentially be gross misconduct.

Complaints against Councillors

Following the Ledbury case, the law is clear that any formal complaint about a Councillor regarding a breach of the code of conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation (either by the complainant, or the Council with agreement of the complainant). During the investigation, it is critical to ensure that where an employee of the Council has made the complaint, that the Council agrees reasonable measures with the employee to protect their health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties, change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

Careful consideration is required where a grievance is raised against the Council as a whole due to lack of support related to Councillor behaviours. The specific allegations will need to be considered to determine whether the allegations can be addressed by the Council, or require exploration of the Councillors behaviour in order to respond, in which case the Monitoring Officer may be required to investigate the alleged behaviours of a/any Councillors where this may relate to the code of conduct. It is a matter of fact whether the complaint is against the Council and can therefore be dealt with by the Council's grievance procedure or against a Councillor and can only be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer.

UFFCULME PARISH COUNCIL - DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Introduction

1. This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice.
2. It also takes into account the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work.
3. The policy is designed to help council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their jobs. Wherever possible, the council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.
4. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
5. This policy confirms:
 - Informal coaching and supervision will be considered, where appropriate, to improve conduct and/or attendance.
 - The council will fully investigate the facts of each case.
 - The council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective. For more information, see ACAS Performance Management.
 - Employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case.
 - Employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing.
 - Employees may be accompanied or represented by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official - at any investigatory, disciplinary or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
 - The council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. Employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make written submissions.

- If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within seven calendar days of the original meeting date, unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date.
- Any changes to specified time limits in the council's procedure must be agreed to by the employee and the council.
- Information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
- Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision. The appeal decision is final.
- If an employee who is already subject to the council's disciplinary procedure raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure.
- Disciplinary action taken by the council can include a written warning, a final written warning or dismissal.
- This procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this.
- Except for gross misconduct, when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct.
- If an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it.
- The council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example, where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the consent of affected parties.

Examples of misconduct

6. Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct (the list is not exhaustive):
 - Unauthorised absence.
 - Poor timekeeping.
 - Misuse of the council's resources and facilities, including telephone, email and internet.
 - Inappropriate behaviour.
 - Refusal to follow reasonable instructions.
 - Breach of health and safety rules.

Examples of gross misconduct

7. Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct (the list is not exhaustive):

- Bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Incapacity at work because of alcohol or drugs.
- Violent behaviour.
- Fraud or theft.
- Gross negligence.
- Gross insubordination.
- Serious breaches of council policies and procedures, e.g. the Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection Policy and any policies regarding the use of information technology.
- Serious and deliberate damage to property.
- Use of the internet or email to access pornographic, obscene or offensive material.
- Disclosure of confidential information.

Suspension

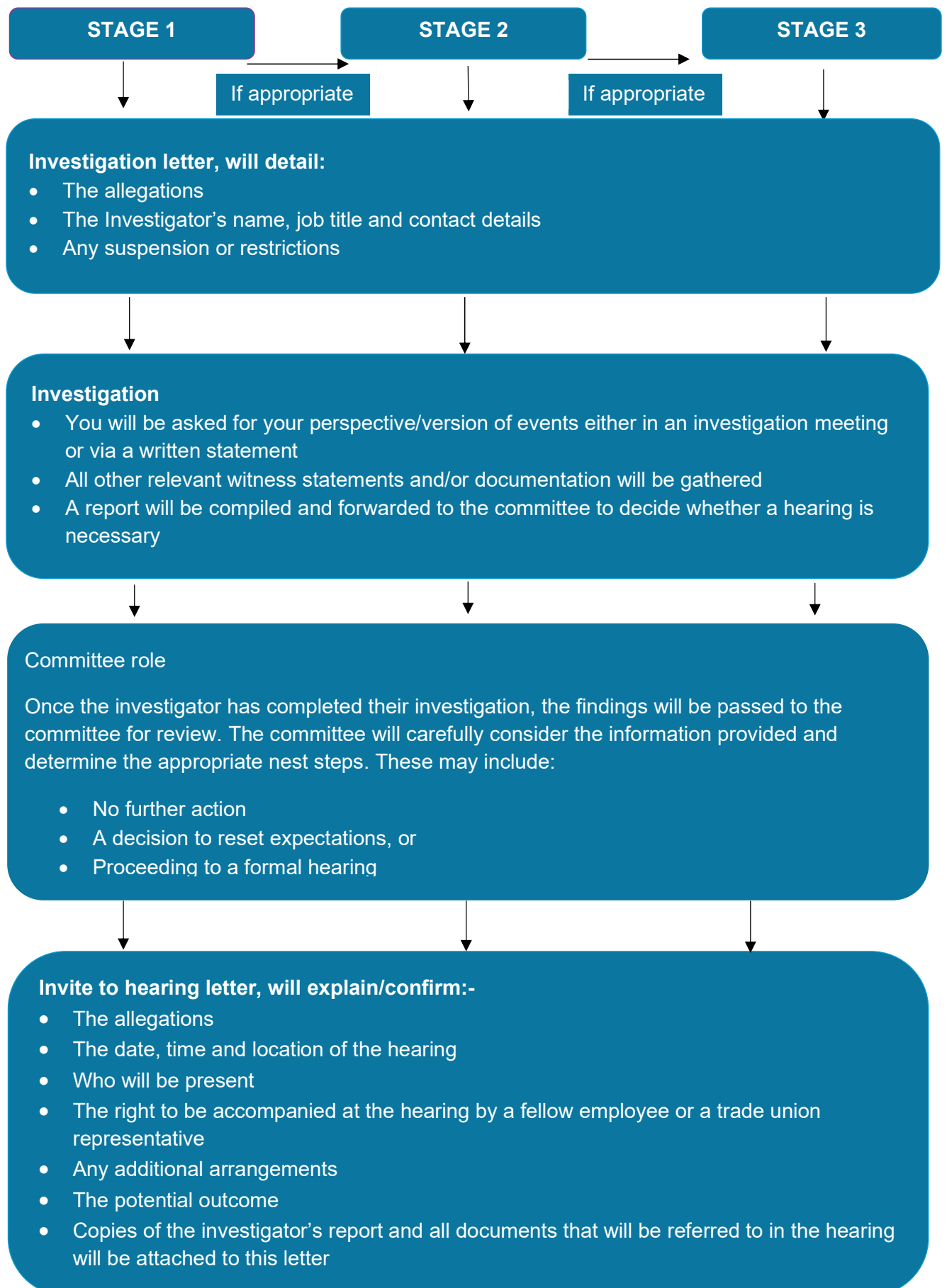
8. If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may suspend the employee while further investigations are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.
9. While on suspension, the employee is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council needs to make contact. The employee must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.
10. The employee must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

Examples of unsatisfactory work performance

11. The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance (the list is not exhaustive):

- Inadequate application of management instructions/office procedures.
- Inadequate IT skills.
- Unsatisfactory management of staff.
- Unsatisfactory communication skills.

The procedure



The Hearing

- An appropriate level of management will conduct the disciplinary hearing ('the Chair'), and there will also be a note-taker present (Vice Chair).
- The Chair will explain the role of all those in attendance, the allegations and go through the evidence that has been gathered
- You will be given the opportunity to respond in full. This will include time to ask questions and present evidence. If you intend to call any witnesses, you must give us advance written notice that you intend to do this
- The Chair will adjourn at the end to consider their decision
- Where possible, the outcome will be given the same day. Where this is not possible, because for example, the Chair requires further time to consider their decision or complete further investigation, you will be informed
- You will be informed of the outcome verbally (either in person or by phone) and then in writing

**Potential outcome:
First Written
warning**

**Potential outcome:
Final Written
warning**

**Potential outcome:
Dismissal (with or
without notice/pay
in lieu of notice)**

Outcome letter will advise:

- The nature of the misconduct that has led to the outcome (including any prior warnings that have been taken into account, if appropriate)
- The action or improvement required
- The timescale for implementing such action (if relevant)
- That this is a first/final written warning and that the next stage may be final written warning/dismissal if there is no sustained improvement or change
- That the warning will remain live for 12 months
- That whilst the warning will not remain active after this time in relation to future disciplinary matters, a record of what has occurred will be kept and may be referred to if relevant
- The right of appeal

Outcome letter will advise:

- The reasons for dismissal
- Any prior warnings that have been taken into account, if appropriate
- The date on which employment will end
- The right of appeal

12. Preliminary enquiries. The council may make preliminary enquiries to establish the basic facts of what has happened in order to understand whether there may be a case to answer under the disciplinary procedure.
13. If the employee's manager (the council) believes there may be a disciplinary case to answer, the council may initiate a more detailed investigation undertaken to establish the facts of a situation or to establish the perspective of others who may have witnessed misconduct.
14. Informal Procedures. Where minor concerns about conduct become apparent, it is the manager's (the Council's) responsibility to raise this with the employee and clarify the improvements required. A file note will be made and kept by the Council. The informal discussions are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. If the conduct fails to improve, or if further matters of conduct become apparent, the Council may decide to formalise the discussions and invite the employee to a first stage disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary investigation

15. A formal disciplinary investigation may sometimes be required to establish the facts and whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.
16. If a formal disciplinary investigation is required, the Council will appoint an Investigator who will be responsible for undertaking a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The Investigator will be independent and will normally be a Councillor. If the Council considers that there are no Councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council. The Investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Council will inform the Investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should specify:
 - The allegations or events that the investigation is required to examine.
 - Whether a recommendation is required
 - How the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a written report.
 - Who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.
17. The Investigator will be asked to submit their findings, usually within 35 Calendar days of appointment, where possible. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory performance or of allegations of minor misconduct, the appointment of an investigator may not be necessary and the Council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage - the disciplinary meeting (see paragraph 22).
18. The Council will notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and details of the person undertaking the investigation. The employee may be asked to meet an investigator as part of the disciplinary investigation. The employee will be given sufficient notice of the meeting with the Investigator so that they have a reasonable

time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of that process. The employee will be provided with a copy of the council's disciplinary procedure. The council will also inform the employee that when they meet with the Investigator, they will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.

19. Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting.
20. If there are other persons (e.g. employees, councillors, members of the public or the council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the Investigator should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.
21. The Investigator has no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the Council whether or not disciplinary action should be considered under the policy.
22. The Investigator's report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:
 - The employee has no case to answer, and there should be no further action under the council's disciplinary procedure.
 - The matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally.
 - The employee has a case to answer, and a formal hearing should be convened under the council's disciplinary procedure.
23. The Investigator will submit the report to the Council, which will decide whether there is no case to answer; the matter should be considered informally, or a formal Disciplinary Hearing should be convened. If the Investigator is a member of the Council making the decision, they should recuse themselves from any formal votes or decision-making regarding their findings as to whether there is a case to answer at a Disciplinary Hearing.
24. If the council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The disciplinary meeting

25. If the Council decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a staffing committee of three councillors to formally hear the allegations. The staffing committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. The Investigator shall not sit on the committee. The staffing committee will be given the delegated authority to make a decision in relation to the Disciplinary.
26. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the committee. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The committee's letter will confirm the following:

- The names of its chair and the other two members.
- Details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting.
- A copy of the information provided to the committee, which may include the investigation report, supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- The time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that they have sufficient time to prepare for it.
- Whether witnesses may attend on the employee's and the council's behalf, and if they may, both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least two working days before the meeting.
- The employee may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

27. The purpose of the disciplinary meeting hearing is for the allegations to be put to the employee and then for the employee to give their perspective. It will be conducted as follows:

- The chair will introduce the members of the committee to the employee and explain the arrangements for the hearing.
- The chair will set out the allegations and invite the Investigator to present the findings of the investigation report (if there has been a previous investigation).
- The chair will invite the employee to present their account.
- The employee (or the companion) will set out their case and present evidence (including any witnesses and/or witness statements).
- Any member of the committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the Investigator and any witness.
- The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up.

28. The chair will provide the employee with the committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The chair will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision in the event that formal action is taken.

29. The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be further investigated by the committee.

Disciplinary action

30. If the committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

First written warning:

31. If the employee's conduct has fallen below acceptable standards, a first written warning will be issued. A first written warning will set out:

- The reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement.

- That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action.
- The employee's right of appeal.
- That a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Final written warning:

32. If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve sufficiently during the currency of a prior warning, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- The reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement.
- That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- The employee's right of appeal.
- That a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Dismissal:

33. The council may dismiss:

- For gross misconduct.
- If there is no improvement within the specified time period, in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning.
- If another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force.

34. The council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, they will receive a written statement of the reasons for their dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of their right of appeal. If the committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action taken as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal:

35. An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. Their written notice of appeal must be received by the council within seven calendar days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.

36. The grounds for appeal include:

- A failure by the council to follow its disciplinary policy.
- The council did not support the committee's disciplinary decision.
- The disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case.
- New evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting.

37. Where possible, the appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the council who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the Investigator. The appeal panel will appoint a chair from one of its members.

38. The employee will be notified, in writing, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

39. At the appeal meeting, the chair will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the disciplinary decision.
- Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.

40. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds for appeal.

41. The chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.

42. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the disciplinary decision of the staffing committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

43. If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved.

44. The appeal panel's decision is final.

Date of adoption: July 2026

Date for next review:

UFFCULME PARISH COUNCIL - GRIEVANCE POLICY

Introduction

1. This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice (<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174>).
2. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. (https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf).
3. It also takes into account relevant law affecting Councils.
4. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
5. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.
6. This policy confirms:
 - employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for their grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
 - any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council
 - an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final
 - information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- if an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure
- if a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they raised the grievance in good faith
- the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties
- Employees can only use all stages of the grievance procedure if the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure (paragraph 4) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a councillor. Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. If the complaint about the councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of Mid Devon District Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure (see paragraph 5)
- the Council may engage external investigators, grievance or appeal panels for the purposes of the process.
- If the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination
- If an employee considers that the grievance concerns their safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with their line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime

Informal grievance procedure

7. The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with their manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with their manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chair of the Council or, if appropriate, the Vice Chair. If the employee's

complaint is about a councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the councillor's consent.

Formal grievance procedure

8. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Council.
9. The Council will appoint a committee of 3 members to hear the grievance in the event that the grievance is raised by or relates to the Clerk. Where the grievance is not raised by or relates to the Clerk, the Council may appoint the Clerk to hear the Grievance. The committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the committee.

Investigation

10. If the committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigator may be an appropriate employee, Councillor or external party. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, councillors or members of the public).
11. The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the committee.

Notification

12. Within 14 calendar days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:
 - the names of its Chair and other members
 - the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 35 calendar days of when the Council received the grievance
 - the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official
 - a copy of the Council's grievance policy
 - confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of their witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting
 - confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice
 - findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation
 - an invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).

The grievance meeting

13. At the grievance meeting:
 - the Chair will introduce the members of the committee to the employee
 - the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence
 - the Chair will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action does they wants the Council to take
 - any member of the committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness
 - the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case
 - a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the committee.
14. The Chair will provide the employee with the committee's decision, in writing, usually within 7 calendar days of the meeting though may be longer e.g. where further investigations are required. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

The appeal

15. If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the committee, they may submit a written appeal to the Council. An appeal must be received by the Council within 7 calendar days of the employee receiving the committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.
16. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:
 - a failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy
 - the decision was not supported by the evidence
 - the action proposed by the committee was inadequate/inappropriate
 - new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
17. The appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the Council who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the Council who have not previously been involved. If so, the Council may engage external parties if there are insufficient councillors to form the panel. The appeal panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.
18. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 14 calendar days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 35 calendar days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trusted individual, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
19. At the appeal meeting, the Chair will:
 - introduce the panel members to the employee
 - explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the committee

- explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
20. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.
 21. The Chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, and when they are likely to receive the letter. This may be within 14 calendar days of the appeal meeting however will be longer where further investigations are required.
 22. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the original committee or substitute its own decision.
 23. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Date of adoption: July 2026

Date for next review:

UFFCULME PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Date of adoption: July 2026
Date for next review:

Our commitment

The council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.

This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they don't, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, sex/gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

Dignity at work

The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

People not employed by the council

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council.

You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council who will take appropriate action.

Training and prevention

The council will provide training in or raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will provide training to or raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing information with full Council.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

GUIDANCE FOR USING THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Notes

This is an example policy that should be adjusted to reflect the procedures and policy of the council. It is important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

1. Green Book terms

The Green Book sets out practical principles that councils can adopt and acknowledges that local councils will need to select the appropriate measures to match their circumstances.

The guidance covers:

- Developing and action plan to establish and monitor progress
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures
- Training
- Pay, Grading and Conditions of Service
- Dealing with Harassment

Guidance

Where there is text in [square brackets] this part may be updated or be deleted if not relevant. An alternative option may have been provided.

Important notice

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

This document was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

This document has been written by the Worknest HR – a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils. Please contact them on 01403 240 205 for information about their services.