**WHEATHILL PARISH COUNCIL’S 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](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174&utm_source=chatgpt.com)).
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](https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)).
3. It also takes into account relevant law affecting parish councils.
4. The aim is to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible.
5. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees are encouraged to resolve most grievances informally in the first instance.
6. **This policy confirms:**
* Employees have the right to be accompanied at grievance or appeal meetings by a workplace colleague, trade union representative or trade union official.
* Employees will receive reasonable notice of any grievance or appeal meeting.
* Either party may agree to extend time limits.
* Employees have the right to appeal decisions. The appeal decision is final.
* Confidentiality will be respected. Records will be held in line with GDPR.
* Audio/video recordings are prohibited unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment.
* If a grievance is not upheld, no action will be taken against an employee if it was raised in good faith.
* Mediation may be considered at any stage.
* Where grievances involve a councillor, employees may use the informal stage of this policy. Formal complaints against councillors must be referred to Shropshire Council’s Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct process.
* The Council may engage external investigators or panels if required.
* The Council has a duty of care to its employees and must take steps to protect them from bullying, harassment and discrimination, including undertaking risk assessments and ensuring councillors receive appropriate training.

**Informal Grievance Procedure**

1. The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally.
* Employees should raise the issue with the Clerk in the first instance.
* If the grievance relates to the Clerk, it should be raised with the Chair or, if appropriate, the Vice-Chair.
* If the grievance concerns a councillor, the employee may raise it informally with that councillor (with consent of both parties) or with the Chair/Vice-Chair.

**Formal Grievance Procedure**

1. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, and it does not fall solely under the councillor Code of Conduct, it should be submitted in writing to the Chair (or Vice-Chair where appropriate).
2. The Council will convene a Grievance Sub-Committee of three councillors to hear the grievance. No councillor directly involved in the matter will sit on the Sub-Committee. Where necessary, external support may be engaged.

**Investigation**

1. The Sub-Committee may appoint an investigator (councillor, officer or external party) to establish facts.
2. The investigator will summarise their findings in writing and present them to the Sub-Committee.

**Notification**

1. Within 14 calendar days of receiving the grievance (or longer if investigation is needed), the employee will normally be invited to a grievance meeting. The written notification will include:
* Names of Sub-Committee members and Chair.
* Date, time and place of the meeting (normally within 35 calendar days of receipt).
* The employee’s right to be accompanied.
* A copy of this grievance policy.
* Information about witnesses and supporting evidence.
* Any investigation findings if available.
* An invitation to request adjustments (e.g. for health conditions).

**The Grievance Meeting**

1. At the grievance meeting:
* The Chair will introduce members of the Sub-Committee.
* The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present evidence.
* The Chair and members may ask questions.
* Witnesses may be questioned by both sides.
* The employee (or companion) may sum up their case.
* The meeting may be adjourned if further investigation is required.
1. The Sub-Committee will provide the decision in writing, usually within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The letter will confirm any action to be taken and the right to appeal.

**The Appeal**

1. If the employee is dissatisfied, they may submit a written appeal to the Council within 7 calendar days of receiving the decision. Grounds for appeal may include:
* Failure to follow procedure.
* Decision not supported by evidence.
* Action proposed was inappropriate.
* New evidence has come to light.
1. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three councillors not previously involved. If this is not possible, external individuals may be engaged. The panel will appoint a Chair.
2. The employee will be notified in writing of the date and arrangements for the appeal meeting, normally within 14 calendar days of receipt of appeal.
3. At the appeal meeting:
* The Chair will introduce the panel.
* The employee (or companion) will present grounds for appeal.
* The panel will consider the case and may uphold or overturn the Sub-Committee’s decision.
1. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

**Policy Administration**

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