

# HPC

## Highmoor Parish Council

Councillors are summoned to attend the meeting of Highmoor Parish Council which will **commence at 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 11 January 2023 in the Memorial Village Hall, Highmoor RG9 5DX**

( Note: Public speaking will be for a maximum 15 minute period with each speaker to try and limit their time to no more than 3 minutes when raising issues/ points related to council's work- if a member of the public wishes to raise a specific question (related to the work of the parish council including planning applications to be considered by the Council) please contact the Clerk (see below) 48 hours before the meeting giving time for up to date information to be sought. If it is not possible to access required information for the meeting then either a written response will be made at a later date or the question will be included on the next Council agenda.)

**COVID:** The Highmoor Parish Council continues to be vigilant with regard to the Covid virus and if those attending the meeting wish to socially distance/wear face masks the Council asks that such individual choice be respected.

Key:	HPC	Highmoor Parish Council
	OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
	SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council
	VWH	Vale of White Horse District Council
	FMS	Fix My Street
	OALC	Oxfordshire Association Local Councils
	CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy

The following business will be transacted:-

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interests from councillors
3. To receive and approve minutes of Council meeting held on 07 December 2022
4. Oxfordshire County Council:-
  - (a) To note receipt of General Report and if required raise any issues therein
  - (b) To receive/consider Highmoor report from County Councillor D Bartholomew
  - (c) To raise any specific Highmoor highways related matters with County Councillor D Bartholomew
  - (d) OCC related highway matters including updates:-
    - (i) To receive updates re proposed SID signage for driver awareness scheme
    - (ii) To receive new FMS reports
5. South Oxfordshire District Council
  - (a) To receive the monthly report from District Councillors J Robb and L M Hillier
  - (b) To receive information on SODC related matters:-
    - (i) Enforcement issues raised in 2022 awaiting updates:-

**Ref: SE21/102 The Woodman** - query land use change (July 2022)  
**Ref: 388921 - Hayward House/Brooks Barn**, residential dwellings on site of former public house (The Dog & Duck) Highmoor – query breach of planning by incorrect siting of gated access plus annexation of intended garden area (to the front and side of Hayward House and into the adjacent Paddock plus use of Hayward House as holiday let.  
**Ref: 388927 - The Paddock, Highmoor, Highmoor** adjacent to site of Hayward House and Brooks Barn – very large amount of soil deposited at the top of this site – query possible development  
**Ref: 388937 & SE22/141 - Satwell House, Highmoor** – new building erected and creation of new gated access onto the B481 – new photographs of gate now available

**If required the Council will suspend Standing Orders to allow a period of 15 Minutes for public speaking**

6. Highmoor Parish Council
  - (a) To consider issues relevant to Council's assets:-
    - (i) Recreation Ground
    - (ii) The Glebe – to consider possible community garden
    - (iii) Telephone kiosk
  - (b) To consider further issues relevant to Highmoor
  
7. Planning
  - (a) Planning applications  
P22/S4127/FUL – The Lamb at Satwell, Public house  
Conversion to a single dwellinghouse
  - (b) Planning decisions
  
8. Report on Highmoor public footpaths  
To consider Report from Mr S Clarke, Highmoor Parish Footpath Officer  
(appointed by the Chilterns Society)
  
9. Finance:-
  - (a) To approve expenditure (inc VAT where applicable):-

Mrs J E Pickett – Salary January 2023	£ 232.27
Tax	58.06
Allowance	20.84
Expenses 22/23	96.00
(stationery/postage/ travelling etc)	
Hire of Memorial hall	18.00
(11 January 2023)	
  - (b) To approve Precept and Budget for 2023/24 (see copy attached)
  - (c) To consider applications for financial assistance from:  
    Community First Oxfordshire (annual subscription £35)  
    Sue Ryder Palliative Care (donation)
  
10. Diversity at Work Policy  
To adopt the above draft policy (see copy attached)

11. Information/publications received since 7 December 2022

- SODC - District councillor reports for November/December 2022
- S Craig - Community Garden
- A Yeo - Social Media Strategy course
- SODC - South News – December 2022
- OCC - OCC Cty Councillor D Bartholomew – Highmoor December 2022/  
January 2023 reports
- SODC - District Councillors J Robb and L Hillier – reports December 2022  
January 2023
- SODC - further emergency weather alert – Level 3
- SODC - illegal taxi hire
- SODC/VWH - revised timetable for Joint Local Plans

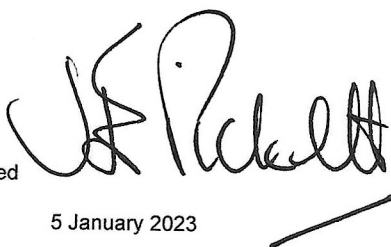
12. **CONFIDENTIAL**

Vacancy – Clerk to the Council

Note: Copies of Reports available on the Council's website/at the meeting and upon request

Signed

Date 5 January 2023



Clerk to the Council -  
Mrs J E Pickett  
Tel: 01491 577474

Email: [clerk@highmoorparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@highmoorparishcouncil.org.uk)

### Issue requiring help from the parish council

I've walked and inspected most of the paths within the parish and most are in good condition. I have found the following issue on path 249/1.

At each end of path 249/1 new stiles have been installed.



These stiles are very high



North Stile

South Stile

The Oxfordshire Gov website recommends the following regarding the installation of stiles:

- the height for any step should be no more than 300 mm (1 ft) from the ground or between steps
- the top rail should ideally be no more than 900 mm (3 ft) high. If a higher fence is essential please contact your field officer for specific advice

The two stiles on path 249/1 have the following dimensions

Stile at the North end of path 249/1

Height of top rail	1030mm
Height of bottom step	380mm
Height between bottom and second step	380mm

Stile at the South end of path 249/1

Height of top rail 1120mm

Height of bottom step 400mm

Height between bottom and second step 390mm

For both stiles, the height of the top rail and the distance between steps are too large.

Please can the parish council contact the landowner, make them aware of the recommendations and see if they can improve the design?

The information I've quoted on stile installation can be found at

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/countryside/countryside-access/public-rights-way/information-landowners/gaps-gates-and-stiles>

Sean Clarke

Highmoor Parish Path Representative

**HIGHMOOR PARISH COUNCIL –  
Draft Budget 2023/24**

	Budget 2022/23	Forecast 22/23	Budget 23/24
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>			
Precept	8885.00	8885.00	8885.00
Rent – recreation ground	150.00	150.00	150.00
VAT reclaim	107.92	461.00	
CIL	-	<u>12887.00</u>	
	<u>9142.92</u>	<u>22383.00</u>	<u>9035.00</u>
<b>PAYMENTS:</b>			
Office administration			
Salary		928.97 (21/22)	
“ annual increase 21/22		62.28 (21/22)	
“ 3484:00		2903.26 (22/23)	3559.00
“ annual increase 22/23		173.30 (22/23)	
“ inc staff 22/23		889.75 (22/23)	
Allowance		20.84 (21/22)	
250.08		208.40 (22/23)	312.00
“ annual increase 22/23		51.60 (22/23)	
“ staff 22/23		76.00 (22/23)	
LGPS (Local Govmt Pension Scheme)	-	-	249.00
SLCC (Society Local Council Clerks) annual subscription	-	-	200.00
Training (councillors)	300.00	-	300.00
Expenses (postage/ink stationery/travelling etc) website	130.00	283.20 (20/22)	120.00
	325.00	96.00	
		310.00	380.00
The Glebe			
Grasscutting	700.00	400.00	400.00
Tree maintenance	500.00	680.00	600.00
Recreation Ground			
Hedgetrimming	90.00	90.00	90.00
Maintenance equipment	300.00	300.00	300.00
Solicitors fees (lease)	956.00	956.20	-
Miscellaneous			
Dog bins (3)	1448.00	312.00	312.00
Telephone kiosk	150.00	75.00	150.00
War memorial	100.00	-	100.00
Maintenance	400.00	-	400.00
Elections 2023	-	-	1500.00
General administration			
Audit	470.00	190.00	200.00
Venue hire	140.00	126.00	126.00
Insurance	470.00	450.39	460.00
Section 137			
Grants	100.00	100.00	200.00
Grasscutting (Common)	420.00	-	500.00
Poppy wreath	60.00	55.00	60.00
Section 142 (donations)	100.00	100.00	100.00
Section 143 (subscriptions)	200.00	231.00	250.00
VAT	<u>250.00</u>	<u>278.00</u>	
	<u>11343.08</u>	<u>10346.79</u>	<u>10868.00</u>



# **HPC HIGHMOOR PARISH COUNCIL**

## **DIVERSITY AT WORK POLICY**

**January 2023**

**Highmoor 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.**

**(Note: that for the purposes of reading/understanding this document the word `Council` refers to the Highmoor Parish Council unless otherwise stated.)**

### **Purpose**

The 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

### **Civility Pledge**

In support of this objective, the Council has signed up to the Civility Pledge, as a commitment to civility and respect in our work, and politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.

(Further information about the Civility and Respect Pledge is available [NALC & SLCC](#))

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 the Clerk to the Council, and all employees engaged to work at Highmoor Parish Council - should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with the Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, 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 Deputy 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. The 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, the Civility and Respect Pledge, Equality Opportunities 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.

#### Harassment

- Where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic
- Behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic

#### Bullying

- Behaviour that leaves the victim feeling threatened, intimidated, humiliated, vulnerable or otherwise upset. It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic.

### **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).

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 appropriate contact i.e. the Chairman/ Deputy Chairman or the Clerk in the first instance. 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 a councillor. 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:** If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague 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/the Chairman 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 Deputy Chair). The Deputy Chair 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 C 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, councillors appointed by the Council 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.

**Note:** this is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed annually

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