

Old Catton Parish Council

Zero Tolerance Policy

1. Introduction

Old Catton Parish Council is committed to fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for employees, Councillors and members of the public. This policy sets out the Council's commitment to addressing unacceptable behaviour, including but not limited to violence, aggression, abuse. Harassment, discrimination or bullying.

This policy applies to all employees, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and members of the public interacting with the Parish Council.

2. Policy Statement

Old Catton Parish Council has a **zero tolerance approach** to:

- **Verbal abuse:** swearing, shouting or intimidating language
- **Physical violence:** threats, assaults or any form of physical harm
- **Harassment:** repeated or unwanted behaviour that causes distress or fear
- **Discrimination:** any behaviour that undermines equality on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or any other protected characteristic
- **Bullying:** intentional behaviour intended to belittle, intimidate or demean others
- **Damage to property:** intentional acts of vandalism or sabotage

Any incidents of the above will be addressed quickly, fairly and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations

3. Scope

This policy applies to

- All **employees** and **Councillors** of the Parish Council
- **Contractors** and **volunteers** engaged in Parish Council activities
- Members of the **public** interacting with the Parish Council, whether in person, by telephone or through written or electronic communication

4. Reporting and Response

4.1 Reporting Incidents:

- All employees, Councillors or individuals who experience or witness unacceptable behaviour are encouraged to report the incident to the Clerk or a designated Councillor
- Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be treated confidentially, where possible, in line with GDPR regulations

4.2 Response to Incidents:

- All reported incidents will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken

- Actions may include issuing warnings, restricting access to Council services, reporting to the authorities or taking disciplinary action
- Support a culture of respect, fairness and understanding within the Council
- Avoid behaviour or decision making that could contribute to unnecessary stress for employees
- Be aware of the signs of stress and see to address them collaboratively

5. Enforcement

5.1 Members of the Public:

Individuals engaging in unacceptable behaviour may be:

- Asked to leave Council premises or meetings
- Issued written warnings regarding their behaviour
- Barred from attending meetings or interacting with the Council for a defined period of time
- Referred to the Police if criminal behaviour is involved

5.2 Employees and Councillors:

- Employees or Councillors found to have engaged in unacceptable behaviour will face disciplinary procedures in line with the Council's disciplinary procedures, which may include termination of employment or disqualification as a Councillor

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The Parish Clerk:

- Ensure incidents are logged and investigated
- Provide training and resources to employees and Councillors on this policy

6.2 Councillors and Employees:

- Uphold this policy and model respectful behaviour in all interactions
- Report incidents promptly to ensure swift resolution

6.3 Members of the Public:

- Interact with the Parish Council respectfully and refrain from unacceptable behaviour

7. Monitoring and Review

The Parish Council will:

- Review this policy annually or following significant incidents to ensure its effectiveness
- Use feedback and incident reports to identify improvements and maintain a safe environment for all

8. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with relevant UK laws including:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Protection of Harassment Act 1997
- The Public Order Act 1986

9. Conclusion

Old Catton Parish Council values respectful and constructive engagement with all individuals. By adopting a zero-tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour the Council aims to promote a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Adopted: 10th February 2025