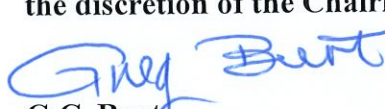




To All Members of the Working Practices Committee,

You are summoned to a meeting of the **Working Practices Committee** on **Wednesday 14 October 2026 7PM** at the Billingshurst Centre.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and speak for a maximum of three minutes about an item on the agenda for this meeting during the Public Session at the discretion of the Chairman. They must give their name.


G.C. Burt
Clerk to the Council

7 October 2026

A G E N D A

1. Chairman's Announcements
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Receive Declarations of Interest and Notification of Changes to Members' Interests.
4. Public Session. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and speak for a maximum of three minutes about an item on the agenda for this meeting, at the discretion of the Chairman. They must give their name.
5. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 May 2026, previously sent.
6. Clerk's Report
7. To consider comment from External Auditor ref. Code of Conduct Appendix **A**.
8. Consideration of new draft Compassionate Leave Policy - Appendix **B**.
9. Consideration of new draft Vexatious Complaints Policy - Appendix **C**.
10. Consideration of new draft Safeguarding Policy (for Centre + Council) - Appendix **D**.
11. Consideration of new draft A.I. Policy - Appendix **E**.
12. To consider future workload of Committee - Chairman and Clerk to give verbal report.
13. Exclusion of Press and Public.
14. To consider staffing matters – Appendix **F**.

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 2 December 2026

Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present.

MEMBERS: MM, JM, DW, KR, AR, CJ, SD, PB


MOORE

Our ref: 979/2103938

21 August 2026

Mr G C Burt
Billingshurst Parish Council
Billingshurst Centre
Roman Way
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 9QW

Moore East Midlands

Oakley House
Headway Business Park
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Dear Clerk

Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 March 2026

Please find enclosed the signed External Audit Report to accompany your Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026.

We also enclose a note of our charges based on the fixed rate audit fee as set by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

Authorities who have not claimed exemption

Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 stipulate that Authorities, who are not inactive Authorities, must publish the following (including on the Authority's website):

- (a) The audited version(s) of the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- (b) The auditor's certificate and opinion
- (c) Any public interest report or other recommendation of the auditor.
- (d) A form of Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit

We draw your attention to the following points:

- Upon review, general reserves appear to be held at a low level. The council should keep this under review and ensure that they have sufficient general reserves to cover expenditure. Per Paragraph 5.34 of the SAPPP Practitioners' Guide 2025, best practice suggests this should generally be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose.
- Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the Council to review or re-adopt its Code of Conduct, the Council should ensure that the model code is considered on at least an annual basis to identify any updates or amendments that may have been issued. To provide a clear audit trail and evidence of governance oversight, it would be better practice for such consideration to be formally recorded in the Council's minutes.

A template Notice of Conclusion of Audit form is available in the useful documents section on our website mooreeastmidlands.co.uk/sectors/smaller-authorities/smaller-authorities-agar-forms/

The notice must also state that an elector may inspect those documents at all reasonable times and without payment. The address and times when this inspection may be carried out must also be given.



Parish Council

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

Policy

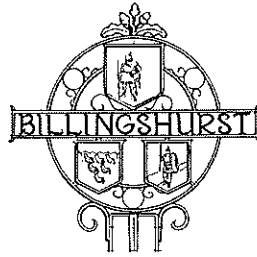
We aim to extend sympathy, compassion and understanding should employees suffer a bereavement. At all times, we will try to assist employees to come to terms with their loss.

Application for bereavement leave should be made to the Clerk.

We will normally grant up to 5 days unpaid leave in the event of the death of an immediate relative (spouse, parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law and father-in-law). Any time off in addition to this should be discussed with the employee's manager. Reasonable unpaid compassionate leave will be granted taking into account such factors as the relationship with the deceased person and the timing and location of the funeral.

We accept that sometimes the need to take this leave can arise at very short notice, but request that employees should discuss their requirements with their manager before taking any time off and, in any event, at the earliest opportunity. All requests for compassionate leave will be dealt with on a confidential basis.

APPENDIX C



Parish Council

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH HABITUAL OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS

Introduction

This policy identifies situations where a complainant, either individually or as part of a group, or a group of complainants, might be considered to be 'habitual or vexatious' and ways of responding to these situations.

Definitions

In this policy the term HABITUAL means 'done repeatedly or as a habit'. The term VEXATIOUS is recognised in law and means 'denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant'. In the Parish Council context, it means acting to cause annoyance to the Council.

Definition of a habitual or vexatious complainant

Complainants (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed to be habitual or vexatious where previous or current contact with them shows that they meet one of the following criteria.

Where complainants:

- Persist in pursuing a complaint where the Council's Complaints Procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted.
- Persistently change the substance of a complaint or continually raise new issues or seek to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response whilst the complaint is being addressed. (Care must be taken, however, not to disregard new issues which are significantly different from the original complaint as they need to be addressed as separate complaints).
- Are repeatedly unwilling to accept documentary evidence given as being factual or deny receipt of an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically

answering their questions, or do not accept that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify when a long period of time has elapsed.

- Repeatedly do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts of the Council to help them specify their concerns, and/or where the concerns identified are not within the remit of the Council to investigate.
- Regularly focus on a trivial matter to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point. It is recognised that determining what is a trivial matter can be subjective and careful judgement will be used in applying these criteria.
- Have, in the course of addressing a registered complaint, had an excessive number of contacts with the Council – placing unreasonable demands on staff or members. For the purposes of determining an excessive number, a contact may be in person, by telephone, letter, e-mail or fax. Discretion will be used in determining the precise number of excessive contacts applicable under this section, using judgement based on the specific circumstances of each individual case.
- Have harassed or been personally abusive or verbally aggressive on more than one occasion towards staff or members dealing with the complaint. These will be documented.
- Are known to have recorded private meetings or face to face/ telephone conversations without the prior knowledge and the consent of other parties involved.
- Make unreasonable demands on the customer/Council relationships and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable, for example, insist on responses to complaints or enquiries being provided more urgently than is reasonable or within the Council's Complaints Procedure or normal recognised practice.

Procedures for dealing with habitual or vexatious complainants

If a complainant has threatened or used physical violence towards staff or members at any time – this will in itself, cause personal contact with the complainant, and /or their representatives to be discontinued and the complaint will, thereafter, only be continued through written communication. All such instances will be documented and reported to the next Council meeting in private and confidential session. The Council may wish to appoint a Single Point of Contact which may be a Councillor if staff are subject to vexatious communications from the complainant.

Where complainants have been identified as habitual or vexatious in accordance with the criteria set out above, the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council will as appropriate take one or more of the following courses of action:

- The complainant will be notified in writing why their complaint has been classified as vexatious. The complainant will be advised of the Parish Council's normal complaints procedure and what steps to follow if that is appropriate.

- The complainant will be notified, in writing, that the Council has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but that there is nothing more to add and that continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant will also be notified that the correspondence is at an end, advising the complainant that they are being treated as a persistent or vexatious complainant and as such the Council does not intend to engage in further correspondence dealing with the complaint.
- The Council will decline further contact with the complainant, either in person, by telephone, by fax, by letter or by e-mail or by any other means.
- The complainant will be informed that the Council may seek legal advice on unreasonable or vexatious complaints.
- The Council will suspend all contact with the complainant in connection with the issues relating to the complaint being considered habitual and/or vexatious, while seeking advice or guidance from a solicitor or other relevant agency, such as the External Auditor.
- The Clerk and the Chairman of the Council will invite the complainant to meet with them to discuss the matter.
- The Council will be notified of vexatious or habitual complainants.

Withdrawing Habitual or Vexatious Status

Once a complainant has been determined to be habitual and /or vexatious, their status will be kept under review. There will be an opportunity, however, if they subsequently demonstrate a more reasonable approach or if they submit a further complaint for which the normal complaints procedure would appear appropriate, to have their status reviewed and normal channels of communication may be resumed.



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

BILLINGSHURST COMMUNITY & CONFERENCE CENTRE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version: Draft 1.0

Approval Body: Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre Management Committee / Trustees

Policy Owner: Centre Manager

Responsible Trustee: Chair of Trustees

Review Frequency: Annually

Next Review: 12 months following adoption

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Reporting Procedures

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Training

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C. Useful Contacts

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E. Types of Abuse

1. Policy Statement

Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre ("the Centre") is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone who uses our facilities.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that every person has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and avoidable harm regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic background.

Although the Centre is primarily a provider of community facilities rather than a direct provider of regulated care or youth services, we acknowledge our responsibility to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who visit or use our premises.

We are committed to:

promoting a culture where safeguarding is taken seriously;

acting promptly when concerns arise;

working with statutory agencies where appropriate;

ensuring staff, volunteers and Trustees understand their safeguarding responsibilities;

expecting organisations hiring the Centre to maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements where their activities involve children or adults at risk;

reviewing our safeguarding arrangements regularly to ensure they remain effective.

Safeguarding forms an integral part of our organisational values:

Belong – everyone should feel welcome, respected and safe.

Grow – we support learning, development and wellbeing.

Celebrate – we value diversity and encourage positive participation.

Care – we place the welfare of people at the centre of everything we do.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for safeguarding within Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre.

The policy aims to:

- protect children, young people and adults at risk using the Centre;
- provide clear guidance to Trustees, employees and volunteers;
- outline the responsibilities of organisations hiring the Centre;
- ensure concerns are recognised and reported appropriately;
- support compliance with safeguarding legislation and recognised good practice;
- promote a positive safeguarding culture throughout the organisation.

This policy should be read alongside the Centre's Health & Safety Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Staff Handbook, Complaints Procedure, Risk Assessments and Hiring Terms and Conditions.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

Trustees

Employees

Volunteers

Casual staff

Contractors working on behalf of the Centre

Organisations hiring Centre facilities

Individuals hiring Centre facilities

Visitors to the Centre

The policy covers safeguarding concerns relating to:

children and young people (under 18 years of age);

adults at risk;

allegations against staff or volunteers;

concerns arising on Centre premises;

concerns disclosed whilst using Centre services;

concerns observed by staff or volunteers.

This policy applies whenever Centre staff or representatives become aware of information that suggests a person may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

4. Definitions

Child

A child is any person under the age of eighteen years.

Adult at Risk

For the purposes of this policy, an adult at risk is someone aged eighteen or over who has needs for care or support and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding includes:

- preventing harm before it occurs;
- protecting people from abuse or neglect;
- responding appropriately when concerns arise;
- working with relevant agencies to reduce future risk.

5. Our Safeguarding Principles

Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre is committed to the following principles.

Everyone has the right to be safe

Every individual using the Centre should be able to participate without fear of abuse, bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Every Trustee, employee and volunteer has a responsibility to remain vigilant and report concerns appropriately.

We will always listen

Concerns raised by children, adults, visitors, staff or volunteers will always be taken seriously.

We will act promptly

Safeguarding concerns will never be ignored or delayed unnecessarily.

Where there is immediate risk of harm, emergency services will be contacted without delay.

We will work with others

Safeguarding is most effective when organisations work together.

Where appropriate we will cooperate fully with:

Police

Children's Services

Adult Social Care

Billingshurst Parish Council

other statutory agencies

We will treat everyone fairly

Safeguarding procedures will be applied consistently, fairly and without discrimination.

6. Our Role as a Community Venue

Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre exists primarily to provide accessible facilities for the benefit of the local community.

The Centre hosts a wide variety of activities organised by independent groups including:

community organisations;

charities;

exercise classes;

youth organisations;

educational activities;

public meetings;

conferences;

private functions.

In most circumstances these activities are organised and managed independently of the Centre.

Accordingly:

responsibility for supervising participants remains with the hirer;

organisations working with children or adults at risk remain responsible for safeguarding within their own activities;

Centre staff are not responsible for supervising participants unless specifically employed to do so.

However, where Centre staff observe behaviour that gives rise to safeguarding concerns, or receive information suggesting someone may be at risk, this policy will apply.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. While specific duties differ according to role, every person involved with the Centre has a responsibility to promote the welfare of others and report concerns appropriately.

7.1 Trustees

The Trustees (Management Committee) have overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

The Trustees will:

- promote a culture where safeguarding is recognised as a governance priority;

- approve and review this policy annually;

- ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are maintained;

- ensure sufficient resources are available to implement this policy;

- support the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);

- ensure safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately;

- review safeguarding incidents to identify lessons learned;

- comply with any reporting obligations to statutory bodies where required.

Trustees are not expected to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves unless specifically directed by the relevant statutory authority.

7.2 Centre Manager (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The Centre Manager will normally act as the Centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL is responsible for:

- promoting safeguarding awareness throughout the Centre;

- ensuring concerns are responded to promptly;

- maintaining confidential safeguarding records;

- making referrals where appropriate;

- liaising with statutory agencies;

- supporting staff and volunteers;

ensuring safeguarding remains embedded within Centre operations;
reviewing safeguarding arrangements annually.

Where the Centre Manager is unavailable, concerns should be reported to the nominated Deputy Safeguarding Lead or, where necessary, directly to the Police or relevant safeguarding authority.

7.3 Employees

All employees are expected to:

remain alert to possible safeguarding concerns;
treat everyone with dignity and respect;
act professionally at all times;
report concerns immediately;
cooperate with safeguarding investigations;
complete safeguarding training provided by the Centre;
maintain confidentiality.

Employees must never assume that someone else has reported a concern.

7.4 Volunteers

Volunteers have the same safeguarding responsibilities as employees whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the Centre.

Volunteers should:

follow this policy;
report concerns promptly;
participate in safeguarding awareness training where appropriate;
seek guidance whenever unsure how to respond.

7.5 Contractors

Contractors working within the Centre should:

conduct themselves appropriately;

report safeguarding concerns they become aware of whilst working on Centre premises;
comply with Centre safeguarding requirements where applicable.

7.6 Hirers

Organisations and individuals hiring Centre facilities have responsibility for safeguarding participants during their own activities.

Where activities involve children or adults at risk, hirers should:

- have appropriate safeguarding arrangements;
- ensure adequate supervision;
- ensure leaders and volunteers are suitably recruited;
- undertake DBS checks where legally required;
- comply with relevant safeguarding legislation;
- provide evidence of safeguarding arrangements if requested.

The Centre reserves the right to refuse or terminate bookings where safeguarding arrangements are considered inadequate.

8. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Centre shall appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Normally this will be:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Centre Manager

Deputy DSL

Normally the Parish Clerk or another officer nominated by the Trustees.

The DSL is **not** responsible for investigating abuse.

Their role is to:

receive safeguarding concerns;

ensure appropriate records are maintained;

seek advice where necessary;

make referrals to statutory agencies;

coordinate communication with Trustees where appropriate.

9. Safeguarding Arrangements for Hirers

As a community venue, many safeguarding responsibilities rest with organisations using the Centre rather than with the Centre itself.

Accordingly:

The Centre expects organisations working with children or adults at risk to:

operate their own safeguarding policy;

maintain suitable supervision ratios;

ensure appropriate recruitment procedures;

maintain appropriate insurance;

obtain DBS checks where required;

manage behavioural issues within their own activities.

Centre staff do not normally supervise participants attending independently organised activities.

However, Centre staff will report safeguarding concerns arising during any activity taking place on Centre premises.

Where appropriate, the Centre may request copies of:

safeguarding policies;

codes of conduct;

insurance certificates;

DBS arrangements;

safeguarding contact details.

These requests are intended to demonstrate reasonable assurance rather than transfer safeguarding responsibility from the hirer to the Centre.

10. Safer Recruitment

The Centre is committed to recruiting suitable employees and volunteers.

Recruitment procedures should be proportionate to the role.

Where safeguarding responsibilities exist, recruitment may include:

application forms;

interviews;

references;

identity checks;

right-to-work checks;

DBS checks where appropriate;

induction;

probationary monitoring.

Not every role within the Centre requires a DBS check.

DBS eligibility will always be determined in accordance with current legislation.

The Centre will not request DBS checks where there is no legal basis to do so.

11. Code of Conduct

All Trustees, employees and volunteers should:

act professionally;

treat everyone fairly;

avoid discriminatory behaviour;

avoid situations that could be misinterpreted;

maintain appropriate professional boundaries;

report concerns immediately.

Staff should never:

ignore safeguarding concerns;

promise confidentiality to someone making a disclosure;

investigate allegations themselves;

place themselves in situations where their actions may be misunderstood.

12. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Abuse can occur in many forms.

Staff are not expected to diagnose abuse.

They are expected to recognise when something appears wrong and report concerns appropriately.

Possible indicators may include:

unexplained injuries;

significant changes in behaviour;

fearfulness;

neglect;

inappropriate sexual behaviour;

financial exploitation;

controlling behaviour;

repeated disclosures;

concerning interactions between adults and children.

The presence of one indicator does not necessarily mean abuse has occurred.

However, concerns should always be reported where there is reasonable cause for concern.

13. Types of Abuse

Safeguarding concerns may involve:

Physical abuse

Emotional abuse

Sexual abuse

Neglect

Financial abuse

Psychological abuse

Domestic abuse

Discriminatory abuse

Modern slavery

Self-neglect

Organisational abuse

Online abuse

Radicalisation and extremism

Further guidance is provided in Appendix E.

14. Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

Anyone may become aware of a safeguarding concern through:

- direct disclosure by a child or adult;
- something seen or heard;
- information provided by another person;
- behaviour that causes concern;
- written, electronic or online communication.

When a concern arises, staff and volunteers should follow the Recognise – Respond – Record – Report approach.

14.1 Recognise

Be alert to signs that a person may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Do not dismiss concerns because they seem uncertain or incomplete.

14.2 Respond

If someone discloses abuse:

Do:

- stay calm and listen carefully;
- take the person seriously;
- reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- explain that you may need to share the information with people who can help;
- ask only open questions necessary to clarify immediate safety.

Do not:

- promise confidentiality;
- investigate the allegation;
- ask leading questions;
- press for unnecessary details;
- express shock, disbelief or anger;

confront the alleged perpetrator.

Immediate danger

If anyone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, call 999 immediately.

14.3 Record

As soon as possible after the concern arises:

make a written record;

use the person's own words where possible;

record dates, times and names;

record what was observed, heard or disclosed;

distinguish clearly between fact and opinion;

sign and date the record.

Records should be made as soon as practicable and normally on the same day.

14.4 Report

Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

Never assume that someone else has already reported the concern.

15. Reporting Procedures

15.1 Immediate danger

Where a child or adult is at immediate risk of serious harm:

Call 999.

Request Police and/or Ambulance as appropriate.

Then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

15.2 Non-emergency safeguarding concerns

The DSL will consider the concern and determine whether referral is required to:

West Sussex Children's Services (for concerns relating to anyone under 18);

West Sussex Adult Social Care (for concerns relating to adults at risk);

Sussex Police;

other relevant statutory agencies.

Where necessary, advice may be sought from safeguarding professionals or local authority safeguarding teams.

15.3 If the concern involves the DSL

If a concern relates to the DSL, the concern must be reported directly to:

the Deputy DSL;

the Chair of Trustees; or

the Police or local authority safeguarding team if immediate action is required.

15.4 Allegations against staff, volunteers or trustees

Any allegation that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee has:

behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk;

may have committed a criminal offence;

poses a risk of harm to others; or

has behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with vulnerable people,

must be treated as a safeguarding matter and referred promptly to the appropriate safeguarding authority.

Internal disciplinary processes must not replace referral to statutory agencies where such referral is required.

15.5 Whistleblowing

Employees and volunteers who believe safeguarding concerns are not being handled appropriately may raise concerns through the Centre's Whistleblowing Procedure or directly with the relevant statutory authority.

16. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information is sensitive and must be handled carefully.

The Centre will:

share information only on a need-to-know basis;

keep safeguarding records secure;

comply with data protection legislation;

retain records in accordance with approved retention arrangements.

Confidentiality is important, but it must not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to protect a child, an adult at risk, or another person from harm.

Individuals making disclosures should be informed that information may need to be shared with appropriate authorities in order to keep people safe.

17. Record Keeping

The DSL will maintain a secure safeguarding concerns record.

Records should include:

the date of the concern;

who reported it;

what was observed or disclosed;

actions taken;

referrals made;

outcomes where known.

Safeguarding records will be stored separately from routine operational records and access will be restricted to authorised persons.

18. Training and Awareness

The Centre will ensure that safeguarding awareness is maintained throughout the organisation.

This will normally include:

- safeguarding awareness as part of staff induction;
- periodic refresher training for employees and volunteers;
- appropriate safeguarding briefing for Trustees;
- additional training for the DSL and Deputy DSL.

Training arrangements will be proportionate to the level of safeguarding responsibility within each role.

19. Online and Digital Safety

Where the Centre uses websites, social media, online booking systems or digital communications, reasonable steps will be taken to:

protect personal information;

use secure passwords and access controls;

ensure online content is appropriate;

respond appropriately to online safeguarding concerns;

obtain consent for the use of images where required.

Staff and volunteers should report any online behaviour that raises safeguarding concerns.

20. Monitoring and Review

The Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements through:

- annual policy review;
- review of safeguarding incidents and concerns;
- consideration of lessons learned;
- review of training completion;
- review of safeguarding-related risks.

This policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following any serious safeguarding incident;
- following significant changes in legislation or guidance;
- following major changes to Centre operations.

21. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Centre policies and procedures:

Health & Safety Policy

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Staff Handbook

Whistleblowing Procedure

Complaints Procedure

Data Protection / Privacy Policy

Lone Working Procedure

Young Workers Risk Assessment

Incident Reporting Procedure

Hirer Terms & Conditions

Recruitment and Volunteer Procedures

Appendix

Appendix A – Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

Concern identified

You see, hear or receive a disclosure.

Immediate danger?

Is anyone at risk of serious harm right now?

Call 999

Then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Listen & reassure

Do not promise confidentiality.

Record

Write down what was seen, heard or disclosed.

Report

Tell the DSL / Deputy DSL immediately.

DSL considers referral to Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Police or other agencies.

Appendix B – Safeguarding Concern Report Form

Date and time of concern:

Name of person reporting:

Contact details:

Name of child/adult concerned (if known):

Date of birth / age (if known):

Details of concern (include exact words where possible):

Immediate actions taken:

Reported to (name and role):

Date and time reported:

Signature:

Appendix C – Useful Contacts

Appendix D – Guidance for Hirers

Where activities involve children or adults at risk, hirers should:

have a safeguarding policy appropriate to their organisation;

ensure leaders and volunteers are suitably recruited;

obtain DBS checks where legally required;

maintain adequate supervision;

have procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns;

ensure participants know who to speak to if worried.

By hiring the Centre, organisations confirm that they are responsible for safeguarding within their own activities and will comply with all relevant legal requirements.

Appendix E – Types of Abuse

This appendix provides brief guidance only.



Parish Council

POLICY FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Policy

This policy sets out how Billingshurst Parish Council will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly, safely and appropriately in its work.

AI tools can provide useful support to the Council, including helping to draft documents, summarise information, improve accessibility, generate ideas and assist with administrative tasks. However, AI must be used as a support tool and not as a replacement for the judgement, accountability or decision-making of councillors and officers.

The Council recognises that AI technology is developing rapidly and this policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All parish councillors
- The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
- Council employees and volunteers
- Any person authorised to use Council systems or information when using AI in connection with Council business.

It applies to publicly available AI services, including generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and similar services.

Principles

The Council will follow the following principles when using AI:

- A councillor or authorised officer must remain responsible for any work produced with the assistance of AI.
- AI-generated material must not be treated as automatically accurate or authoritative.
- AI can produce incorrect, incomplete or misleading information.
- Any AI-generated material used by the Council must be checked by a suitably competent person before publication, circulation or use in Council business.

Particular care must be taken with:

- Legal information
- Financial information
- Planning matters
- Employment matters
- Personal information
- Information relating to vulnerable people
- Statements concerning individuals or organisations.

Data protection

Councillors and officers must comply with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's own data protection policies.

Personal, confidential or sensitive information must not be entered into a public AI system unless the Council has specifically approved the system and appropriate safeguards are in place.

This includes, for example:

- Names linked to personal circumstances
- Addresses and contact details
- Complaints
- Personnel information
- Financial or banking information
- Medical information
- Information relating to children
- Passwords or security information
- Confidential correspondence
- Information subject to legal privilege.

Where there is any doubt, the information must not be entered into an AI system.

Transparency

Where appropriate, the Council should be open about its use of AI.

AI should not be used to create the impression that a communication has been personally written by a named individual when that would be misleading.

Acceptable Use

Subject to the safeguards in this policy, AI may be used to assist with routine Council activities. All such content must be checked before publication. AI should **not** be treated as the sole source of evidence for a Council decision.

Examples include:

Administration

- Drafting agendas and meeting documents
- Producing first drafts of reports
- Summarising lengthy documents
- Creating checklists
- Improving grammar and spelling
- Formatting information.

Communications

- Drafting website content
- Social media posts
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Public information notices
- Plain-English versions of Council information.

Research

- Generate research questions
- Identify issues for further investigation
- Summarise publicly available information
- Suggest sources for further checking.

Accessibility

AI may assist with:

- Plain-English summaries
- Translation
- Alternative formats
- Improving readability
- Producing accessible versions of Council information.

Translations and important public communications should be checked by a competent person before publication where accuracy is important.

Prohibited Use

AI must not be used to:

1. Make final decisions on behalf of the Council
2. Determine whether a person should receive a Council service, grant or benefit without appropriate human assessment
3. Make employment, disciplinary or recruitment decisions without appropriate human involvement
4. Generate or approve financial transactions
5. Provide legal advice on behalf of the Council without appropriate professional verification
6. Create misleading or deliberately deceptive information
7. Impersonate councillors, officers or members of the public
8. Create fake evidence, correspondence or documents
9. Enter confidential Council information into an unapproved AI system
10. Process personal data in breach of data protection requirements.

Procurement and Suppliers

- Only approved AI systems meeting UK data protection and security standards may be procured/used
- Contracts must define data ownership and liability.

Checking AI-Generated Information

Before using AI-generated material, the user should ask:

1. Is the information accurate?
2. Can the important claims be independently verified?
3. Is the information current?
4. Could the AI have misunderstood the question?
5. Could the content contain bias or discrimination?
6. Does it contain personal or confidential information?
7. Could using it create a legal, financial or reputational risk for the Council?

If the answer to any of these questions raises concerns, the material must not be used until it has been properly checked.

Monitoring and Review

Any councillor, employee or member of the public who believes that AI has been used improperly by the Council should raise the matter with the Parish Clerk.

Potential breaches involving personal data should be reported promptly in accordance with the Council's data breach procedure.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant developments in AI technology, legislation or government guidance.

The Council may amend this policy at any time where necessary to protect residents, councillors, employees or Council information.

Policy Statement

Billingshurst Parish Council recognises that Artificial Intelligence can provide valuable assistance in delivering efficient, accessible and effective local government services. The Council will embrace appropriate uses of AI while ensuring that human judgement, democratic accountability, transparency, data protection and public trust remain at the heart of all Council activity.

AI will assist the Council; it will not replace the responsibility of councillors or officers.