

# **WEST PARLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Purpose**

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding those using Parish Council facilities or from any harm that may be caused due to being in contact with West Parley Parish Council. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors associated with West Parley Parish Council
- The design and implementation of West Parley Parish Council's programmes and activities

The Parish Council will review this policy annually.

Definitions Children and young people:

- Anyone under the age of 18 years
  - Vulnerable Adult: Anyone over 18 who is:
    - Unable to care for themselves
    - Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
    - Or may be in need of community care services
- The purpose of this policy is to protect children and vulnerable adults

The policy lays out the commitments made by West Parley Parish Council and informs staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by West Parley Parish Council Parish or associated personnel

### **What is Safeguarding?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with the Council or its activities.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

### **Scope**

All staff contracted by West Parley Parish Council

Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to West Parley Parish Council, including but not limited to the following: councillors; consultants; volunteers; contractors; and visitors.

### **Promoting a safe environment**

In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and do regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, Councillors and leaders of activities in the parish or in/on parish facilities, are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Members of staff and volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults during the course of their duties MUST undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") checks BEFORE commencement of such duties.
- Display on Parish Council notice boards in the village the relevant safeguarding contacts for advice and help. A copy will also be made available on the Parish Council website.

## **A safeguarding concern may be when someone has;**

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, a young person or vulnerable adult,
- behaved towards a child or children, young person or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to them;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the five categories of abuse (i.e. sexual, physical, emotional, neglect and domestic).

## **Policy Statement**

West Parley Parish Council believes that everyone, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. West Parley Parish Council will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding as appropriate: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them West Parley Parish Council commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

## **Prevention**

West Parley Parish Council responsibilities:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with West Parley Parish Council. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our activities is gathered and communicated
- Implement safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

## **Staff and volunteer responsibilities**

Child safeguarding

West Parley Parish Council staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

Adult safeguarding

West Parley Parish Council staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect or financial abuse

## **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

West Parley Parish Council staff and associated personnel must not:

- Behave in a way that involves racism, sexism, homophobia, and bullying and in addition, report any instances of such behaviour to the Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Parish Council.
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, West Parley Parish Council staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by any West Parley Parish Council staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member

## **Enabling reports**

West Parley Parish Council will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

West Parley Parish Council will accept complaints from internal sources and external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

## **How to report a safeguarding concern**

**If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or there is an urgent risk to their safety you must call 999.**

Anyone who has a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Parish Council Clerk who is the named Safeguarding Officer.

Contact details are as follows:

Mrs Linda Leeding Telephone: 07477 514862 Email: [enquiries@westparley-pc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@westparley-pc.gov.uk)

If the individual does not feel comfortable reporting to the Clerk (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to the Chair of the Parish Council.

If it is not possible to report concerns to either of these people, then the individual should seek the advice of either Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board on 01305 221016 or [DSAB@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:DSAB@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or Dorset Safeguarding Children on 01305 221196 or [dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Allegations against staff and volunteers**

The Parish Council should follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding website. No attempt should be made to investigate or take action before consultation with Dorset County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Contact on 01305 221122 or [lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk). Any allegations will be reported to Dorset LADO within 1 working day.

## **Whistle Blowing Procedure**

All Parish Councillors, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues, staff or volunteers and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team as to how to handle such allegations. The Parish Council must not make a judgement on whether the allegations have merit for further investigation, this decision must be for the LADO team.

**Response**

West Parley Parish Council will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to legal and statutory obligations, following the advice of Dorset Council's Safeguarding teams.

West Parley Parish Council will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff and associated personnel found in breach of policy.

West Parley Parish Council will co-operate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.

**Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, young person, vulnerable adult, parents, carers and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk or compromise evidence) up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only and should always be kept secure. Any records kept will be in line with GDPR where appropriate. The Council should seek advice from the Dorset LADO, the Police and Children's Social Care about how much information should be disclosed to the accused person.

This procedure is to be considered for adoption at the full Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Review Period : 1 year