

To Members of the Staffing Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **STAFFING STANDING COMMITTEE** of **HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL** to be held on **MONDAY 13 APRIL at 19:00 HRS, in the EXHIBITION ROOM, THE CIVIC, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, HOLMFIRTH, HD9 3AS**, for the transaction of the following business.

**- AGENDA – (A)**

**Public question time. 7.00pm**

Prior to the commencement of the business session of the Committee, there will be an open session lasting 15 minutes, for members of the public to speak to Members.

**2627 01 Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 7.15pm**

The meeting will be recorded and subsequently published on the **HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL's YouTube** channel.

**TO CONSIDER:** whether any other recordings are to be made.

**2627 02 Apologies for absence. 7.15pm**

Apologies and reasons received are emailed out to members for consideration prior to the meeting commencing.

Clerk to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** apologies for absence, reasons having been distributed beforehand.

**2627 03 Items on the agenda to be discussed in private session 7.17pm**

Members of the public will be excluded from the meeting during such items.

Clerk to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** whether any items on the agenda should be discussed in private session.

**2627 04 Responsibilities to maintain confidentiality 7.19pm**

Cllr Baylin to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** actions regarding responsibilities to maintain confidentiality.

**2627 05 Members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda. 7.24pm**

Consideration will be given to members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and noted.

Any written requests for dispensations received will be considered.

**TO RECEIVE:** Members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the

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agenda.

**TO CONSIDER:** any written requests for dispensations received from members.

**2627 06 Officers' interests in items on the agenda. 7.26pm**

Consideration will be given to the interests in items on the agenda of any officer present.

**TO RECEIVE:** any officer's interests in items on the agenda.

**2627 07 Receipt of Revised Declarations of Pecuniary Interest 7.27pm**

Any revised Declaration of Pecuniary Interest received from members or staff are to be emailed out to the STAFFING COMMITTEE members under separate cover for noting. They will be noted by FULL COUNCIL in due course. Redacted versions of member declarations will be placed on HVPC website.

Clerk to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** any revised declarations of pecuniary interests for Committee members.

**TO CONSIDER:** any revised declarations of pecuniary interests for members of the clerking team.

**2627 08 Minutes for the Extraordinary Staffing Committee meeting on Monday 5 January 2026, numbered 2526 35 to 2526 42. 7.28pm**

**TO NOTE:** the Minutes of the STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING held on Monday 5 January 2026, numbered 2526 35 to 2526 42, **approved** at the MEETING of FULL COUNCIL Monday 2 February 2026 **(B)**.

To receive information regarding ongoing matters arising from the approved minutes which do not appear under other agenda items.

Clerk to report further as necessary.

**TO CONSIDER:** any further action(s) arising from the minutes of previous meetings of the STAFFING COMMITTEE.

**2627 09 Staffing and Staff Training budgets 2025/6 and 2026/7 7.30pm**

£96,108 was committed to the Salaries Budget for 2025-6 with an outturn at year end of £99,519.42. This was £3,411.42 over budget. As has been previously reported the underspend was due to a miscalculation of uplifts when the original budget was set.

The 2025-6 Staff Training Budget of £2,300 had an outturn of £1,302.80 with £997.20 remaining.

The 2026-07 salaries budget is £104,316 based on a predicted annual uplift for all 3 staff members based on a national annual pay award (not yet resolved) and also taking into account the possible awarding of an incremental point for one team member not yet at the top of their salary scale.

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Unfortunately, our pensions provider incorrectly advised that our employer pension rate would be frozen at 12.2% of salary. On the 1 April 2026 the Parish Council was informed that the employer pension rate would be 14.9% of salary, leading to a variance of £2,816.53.

The Staff Training Budget 2026-07 is £2,300.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO advises that any shortfall in the 2026/7 staffing budget be met by drawing upon General Reserves at the appropriate time.

**TO NOTE:** report on the Staffing Budget 2026-7 and Staff Training Budget 2026-07 as presented.

**TO CONSIDER:** any actions with regards to the Staffing Budget 2026-7 or the Staff Training Budget 2026-07.

### 2627 10 2026 Staff Pay Awards

7.35pm

Pay awards for the clerking team fall into three categories:

- a. Incremental annual pay awards – awarded from 1 April each year subject to satisfactory performance reviews (appraisal) and allocated pay ranges for each member of the team. All 3 appraisals are to be concluded prior to the meeting.
- b. National pay awards – the HVPC utilises the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) Pay Spine. A national pay award for 1 April 2026 is yet to be confirmed. Please refer to **(C)**SLCC - *Local Government Pay Claim 2026/27* news item published by the Society of Local Council Clerks via the website on 25 March 2026. Once the pay award is confirmed the pay rise for each member of staff should be backdated to 1 April 2026 and paid out as soon as possible.
- c. Additional points are awarded in line with contracts for specific performance matters such as gaining additional recognised qualifications.

Clerk to report further.

**TO NOTE:** Update regarding the 2026 National Pay Award.

**TO CONSIDER:** actions arising regarding pay resulting from the completion of the appraisal cycle from 2025-6.

**TO CONSIDER:** actions arising from the latest update regarding the 2026 National Pay Award.

### 2627 11 Appraisal/supervision 2025-26

7.40pm

All three members of the clerk team have signed contracts of employment. Job descriptions are in place and time sheets are submitted in a standard format.

Clerk to give verbal update on appraisal 2025-6 for the Deputy Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

Staff Performance and Development Lead to give a verbal update on appraisal 2025-

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6 for the Clerk.

**TO CONSIDER:** update on appraisal/supervision 2025-26.

**TO CONSIDER:** any further actions arising from the update.

**2627 12 Complaints Procedure - review 7.50pm**

Please refer to a revised draft *Complaints Procedure* (D).

Clerk, Acting Chair and Staff Performance and Development Lead to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** recommending the revised *Complaints Procedure* as presented to Annual Council on 18 May 2026 for approval.

**2627 13 Disciplinary Policy - review 8pm**

Please refer to a revised draft *Disciplinary Policy* (E).

Clerk, Acting Chair and Staff Performance and Development Lead to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** recommending the revised *Disciplinary Policy* as presented to Annual Council on 18 May 2026 for approval.

**2627 14 Grievance Policy- review 8.10pm**

Please refer to a revised draft *Grievance Policy* (F).

Clerk, Acting Chair and Staff Performance and Development Lead to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** recommending the revised *Grievance Policy* as presented to Annual Council on 18 May 2026 for approval.

**2627 15 Workflow Report 8.20pm**

Please refer to the Workflow Preliminary Report (G) drawn up by the Assistant Clerk in consultation with Cllr Glenn Kirkby.

This has been shared with the Clerk Team.

Clerk to report.

**TO NOTE:** the Workflow Report as presented.

**TO CONSIDER:** further actions with regards to the Workflow Report.

**2627 16 Other staffing matters 8.30pm**

Clerk and Acting Chair to report.

**TO CONSIDER:** actions arising from other staffing matters.

**2627 17 Training received by Officers 8.40pm**

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Clerk to report on training received by officers since 3 November 2025 and upcoming training.

**TO NOTE:** training received by Officers since the STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING on 3 November 2025.

**TO APPROVE** any upcoming training as presented.

**TO CONSIDER:** any further action with regards to staff training.

**Close of meeting**

**8.45pm**

*Jen McIntosh*

Mrs Jen McIntosh  
Clerk to the Council

Holme Valley Parish Council, Holmfirth Civic Hall, Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth HD9 3AS  
Telephone: 01484 687460 Email: [clerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Draft minutes prepared by Chair of the meeting

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **STAFFING STANDING COMMITTEE** of **HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL** held on **MONDAY 5 JANUARY 2026 at 19:00 HRS, in the EXHIBITION ROOM, THE CIVIC, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, HOLMFIRTH, HD9 3AS**

This meeting has been convened in line with Standing Order 6b:

*“If the Chair of a committee or sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by one-quarter of the members of the committee or sub-committee, any one-quarter of the members of the committee or sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [or sub-committee].”*

The members of the Staffing Committee convening this meeting are:

- Cllr Lawrence Baylin (Vice Chair Full Council and Vice Chair Staffing Committee)
- Cllr Glenn Kirkby (Chair Full Council and member of the Staffing Committee)
- Cllr Mary Blacka (Staff Performance and Development Lead and member of the Staffing Committee)

PRESENT: Cllr Baylin (in the Chair), Cllr Blacka, Cllr Holmes, Cllr Kirkby, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Wilson. Cllr Kirkby arrived at 7.04pm

APOLOGIES AND REASONS APPROVED: Cllr Colling

TAKING MINUTES: Cllr Baylin

## **Public question time.**

No members of the public were present.

## **2526 35 Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

It was noted that this meeting is being audio recorded and that the public session will be made publicly available on the **HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL** website. Video recording is not available due to technical reasons.

The Chair asked if anyone present wished to make their own recording and nobody wished to do that.

## **2526 36 Apologies for absence.**

The Chair noted the absence of Cllr Colling and recorded the concerns and best wishes of the Committee for her. Reasons for absence were approved by the Committee.

## **2526 37 Items on the agenda to be discussed in private session**

Members of the public are excluded from the meeting during such items. The Chair proposed that the bulk of item **2526 42 Update regarding complaint**, should be held in private due to its confidential nature and the rights to privacy for the individuals involved. This was agreed, as was the point at which the meeting went into private session and concluded it.

## **2526 38 Members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.**

No members declared any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda. No written requests for dispensations received from members.

## **2526 39 Officers' interests in items on the agenda.**

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No officer present.

## **2526 40 Receipt of Revised Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

No revised declarations of pecuniary interests for Committee members or for members of the clerking team received. .

## **2526 41 Minutes for the Staffing Committee meeting on 3 November 2025, numbered 2526 17 to 2526 34.**

The Minutes of the STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING held on 3 November 2025, numbered 2526 17 to 2526 34 were approved with the following exception. **2526 28** Other staffing matters. iii. Correction to the wording of the Resolution regarding the Investigation of a complaint was being undertaken. That it was not resolved that a working party would be set up, but rather that the investigation process was to be as per procedure, i.e. referred to a panel and, if necessary, an Appeals panel.

The Committee agreed this correction.

**Matters arising.** Cllr Kirkby gave an update on the item **2526 24** The use of AI. Noted that he has been working with the Assistant Clerk to review the best solution for incorporating AI into our administration processes and that the lack of standardisation across our current programmes makes this not easily achievable for the time being. This remains an ongoing project but, in the meantime, AI is being deployed where it is of help.

Committee resolved to keep this under review at future meetings and noted that the planned External Staffing Review might become relevant in this.

## **2526 42 Update regarding complaint**

The Committee agreed at 7.14pm that the meeting moves into private session for the debate. Any arising actions with regards to a complaint to be within public session in accordance with Standing Orders.

At 9.00pm, it was moved and agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow time to complete business.

Private session ended at 9.13pm.

### **Outcome of consideration of the update regarding the complaint.**

The Staffing Committee, having received and considered the update regarding Complaint raised under item 2526 28, thank Cllr Kirkby for his work in conducting a fact-finding investigation. The independent advice obtained from consultant Mr Paul Hoey of Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd was also noted.

The Committee hereby:

1. Notes the process undertaken to date and the information presented to the Committee.  
The complaint concerns an employee of the Council and, according to the Council's Complaints procedure, is dealt with as an employment matter under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and appropriately referred to the Staffing Committee.
2. Confirms that the handling of the complaint has been reviewed by members and found to be appropriate, although notes that the progress of the process has not been as speedy as might have been hoped for, which was attributed to the sickness absence of the staff

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- member, the sickness of the Committee Chair and the Christmas holiday period.
3. Notes that the process has highlighted shortfalls in the Council's policies and procedures for this process. These are detailed in the learning points set out below.
  4. Notes that the Committee's role and task are to determine how the matter should now be progressed, ensuring compliance with Council policy and safeguarding obligations. The Committee is mindful of the expectation set out in the Disciplinary Procedure that 'Wherever possible, the Council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally'. The Committee identified that the process is, at present, in the stage of being Informal, having instructed an independent member of the Committee to conduct a fact-finding investigation and to report back.
  5. Has concluded that the employee has no case to answer in respect of Complaint 1 and there should be no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure. In respect of Complaints 2 and 3, the matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally. The employee will be issued with a statement of response to the complaint (see below) and should be afforded the opportunity to respond to the Committee via the Acting Chair.
  6. Notes that, whilst the Disciplinary Procedure sets out the requirements to communicate with the employee, it does not identify such requirements with the complainant. However, it does state that 'If the Council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances'. Being mindful of its responsibilities to resolve issues of dissatisfaction and to promote good working relationships amongst all members and employees of the Council, the Committee resolves to send a statement to the complainant to aid understanding of its conclusions and to facilitate ongoing improvements in relationships through dialogue.
  7. Resolves that the above statements of detailed response to the complaint will be drafted by the Chair of the Committee, approved by Committee members, and then issued to the member of staff and to the complainant. The statements issued will not be shared beyond those individuals and the members of the Staffing Committee. This is considered compliant with the Council's adopted Standing Orders on Handling Staff Matters and appropriate for the purposes of confidentiality and rights to privacy.
  8. Recognises that concerns have been raised by members of the staff team in recent Staffing Committee meetings in respect of poor behaviour by members of the Council towards them. The Committee would consider any such behaviour to be unacceptable and counter to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) as well as our shared duty of care as employers. This Committee resolves and recommends to the Council to resolve that we will work purposefully with members of the Council and with our employees to address any such concerns. We confirm that channels of communication for concerns for employees are the Chair of the Council, the Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Staff Performance & Development Lead, and we encourage such reports of incidents to enable us to monitor any examples or trends. We remind members of the Council of their opportunity to challenge Council decisions or actions within Council meetings or to the Chair of the meeting or to the Chair of the Council, and additionally have the option of complaint under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure if appropriate. Recourse to the Monitoring Officer is an option in all cases, but it is hoped that issues can be resolved within the Council wherever possible.
  9. Considers that learning points have been raised as a result of this investigation and are proposed as improvements to be made by this Committee:
    - a. The Committee found that this investigation has highlighted shortfalls in the Council's policies and procedures for this process. These include specified steps to be taken and timescales for these, obligations for and methods of keeping relevant parties informed of plans and progress, clarification of channels of communication, channels for raising concerns at an early stage to allow resolution without recourse to formal actions. A review of the Council's complaints, grievances and disciplinary policies and procedures to be scheduled as soon as possible.

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- b. The Committee noted comments from an external party, gathered in the fact-finding investigation, which were apparently unsubstantiated in written records. The Committee warns against conversations that might be misinterpreted or construed as inappropriate and recommends that any significant communications, whether internal or external, are made or confirmed in writing, or are recorded, so as to ensure transparency and accountability.
- c. The Committee noted that repeated advisory reminders and encouragement to members about the responsibility to declare interests is good practice. It was pleased to note that this has been the case in recent meetings, as at January 2026, and urges this to be maintained, whether from the Clerk or the meeting Chair.
- d. Progress on each of the above recommended learning points to be kept under review by this Committee.

The above resolutions were proposed by the Chair and unanimously carried. There were no abstentions.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



## SLCC - Local Government Pay Claim 2026/27

25 March 2026

The National Employers have now responded to the Trade Unions' claim regarding the pay offer for 2026/27. This is a full and final offer of:

- a 3.3% increase on all SCP points from 1 April 2026
- all other parts of the unions claim are rejected.

Please note that this offer is for a **one year deal only**.

The current Consumer Prices Index for February was 3.2%.

The unions joint claim was submitted in December 2025, the National Employers consulted councils and met on 24 February and adjourned for private political discussions before coming back with this offer.

As a reminder the claim was for (one year deal):

- an increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) across all NJC spinal column points
- a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour for the NJC pay spine
- a two-hour reduction in the working week
- an increase of one day annual leave

Or for a multi-year deal:

- year 1: £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points, alongside the introduction of a £15 minimum hourly rate
- year 2: An increase of RPI + 3%
- year 3: An increase of RPI + 2%

The unions will be considering this and responding to it shortly.

We will keep members advised of progress.



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## Holme Valley Parish Council

### Complaints Procedure

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#### Document Control

**Title:** Complaints Procedure

**Approved by:** Full Council

**Review Cycle:** Every 3 years

**Next Review Due:** [Insert Date]

**Version:** 1.0

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#### 1. Introduction

Holme Valley Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to providing high-quality services and ensuring that complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and promptly. This procedure sets out how complaints may be made and how they will be considered by the Clerk, Staffing Committee, or Full Council.

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#### 2. Scope of the Procedure

This procedure applies to complaints about:

- Council administration, procedures, or service delivery
- Actions or behaviour of staff acting in their official capacity
- Decisions of the Council or its committees

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- Complaints about councillors (refer to the Monitoring Officer)
  - Staff grievances (see Grievance Policy)
  - FOI/Data Protection matters (statutory processes apply)
- 

#### 3. Principles

The Council will ensure that complaints are:

- Handled confidentially and lawfully

- Investigated impartially
  - Responded to promptly
  - Documented and auditable
  - Resolved at the lowest appropriate level
- 

#### **4. Informal Complaints**

Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved informally by the Clerk or relevant officer.

The Clerk may:

- Provide clarification or information.
- Offer a practical solution.
- Seek to resolve misunderstandings.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may submit a formal written complaint.

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#### **5. Submitting a Formal Complaint**

Formal complaints must be submitted **in writing** to the Clerk and must include:

- The nature of the complaint
- Relevant dates, evidence, and individuals involved
- The outcome sought

If the complaint concerns the Clerk, it must be submitted to the **Chair of the Council**.

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#### **6. Initial Assessment**

Within **10 working days**, the Clerk or Chair will:

- Acknowledge receipt
  - Confirm whether the complaint falls within this procedure
  - Determine whether the matter should be handled by:
    - The Clerk
    - The **Staffing Committee**
    - The **Full Council**
- 

#### **7. Complaints Considered by the Staffing Committee**

## 7.1 When the Staffing Committee Will Consider a Complaint

The Staffing Committee will consider complaints relating to:

- Staff conduct or performance
  - Administrative or service delivery failures
  - Matters requiring investigation beyond informal resolution
- 

## 7.2 Step-by-Step Procedure for Formal Complaint reporting to the Staffing Committee

### Step 1 – Receipt and Registration of a formal complaint

- Receipt of formal complaint is acknowledged by the Clerk or Chair as appropriate **within 10 working days** and the Complaints Procedure is shared with the Complainant.
- Complaint referred to Staffing Committee by either the Clerk or Chair as appropriate.
- Confidential case file opened by Clerk or Chair of Council as appropriate.
- Conflicts of interest declared by Clerk or Chair as appropriate.

### Step 2 – Preliminary Review

- The Clerk or Chair reviews the complaint and evidence provided to date.
- In consultation with the Chair of the Staffing Committee, the Clerk or Chair identifies the scope of any investigation needed and information required and appoints an Investigation Lead. Where the complaint involves the Clerk or Chair of Council, or otherwise warrants independent investigation, and with the agreement of the Chair of the Staffing Committee, the services of a suitably qualified independent investigator may be sought.
- The Investigation Lead keeps a log of actions taken to be reported to and noted by the Staffing Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

### Step 3 – Notification

- Complainant is informed of the scope of investigation required.
- Where the complaint is in reference to a staff member, the officer is notified and invited to respond.

### Step 4 – Investigation

- Investigation is carried out, including the holding of interviews and collection of evidence as set out in the scope of the investigation.
- HR/legal advice sought where appropriate.

### Step 5 – Committee Meeting

- Held in confidential session.
- Investigating Officer presents findings.

### **Step 6 – Decision**

- Complaint upheld / partially upheld / not upheld – reasons to be recorded.
- Actions agreed and recorded.

### **Step 7 – Outcome**

- Written outcome to complainant including right of appeal to Full Council within 20 working days.
- Confidential outcome to staff member where appropriate.

### **Step 8 – Record-Keeping**

- Secure digital filing of all documentation in relation to the complaint.
- Complaints log updated.

### **Step 9 – Appeal**

- Appeal to Full Council within 20 working days.

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## **8. Complaints Considered by Full Council**

### **8.1 When Full Council Will Consider a Complaint**

Full Council will consider complaints that:

- Concern decisions made by committees or the Council.
- Raise significant governance or policy issues.
- Are appeals against Staffing Committee decisions.
- Are of substantial public interest.

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### **8.2 Step-by-Step Procedure for Formal Complaint reporting to Full Council**

#### **Step 1 – Receipt and Referral**

Receipt of formal written complaint is acknowledged within **10 working days** by the Clerk or Chair.

Complaint referred to Full Council by Clerk, Chair, or Committee.

#### **Step 2 – Conflict of Interest Check**

Councillors are informed in confidence of complaint by the Clerk or Chair, declare interests and withdraw from considering the Complaint if necessary.

### **Step 3 – Preliminary Review**

- The Clerk, Chair and Chairs of Standing Committees review the complaint and evidence provided to date.
- In consultation with the Chairs of Standing Committees, the Clerk or Chair identifies the scope of any investigation needed and information required and appoints an Investigation Lead. Where the complaint involves the Clerk or Chair of Council, or otherwise warrants independent investigation, and with the agreement of the Chairs of the Standing Committees, the services of a suitably qualified independent investigator may be sought.
- The Investigation Lead keeps a log of actions taken to be reported to and noted by the Council at the next scheduled meeting.

### **Step 4 – Investigation**

- Investigation is carried out, including the holding of interviews and collection of evidence as set out in the scope of the investigation.
- HR/legal advice sought where appropriate.

### **Step 5– Preparation of Papers**

In consultation with the Clerk the Investigation Lead prepares:

- Summary report.
- Evidence.
- Investigation findings.
- Legal/procedural advice.

### **Step 6 – Notification**

Complainant and any staff member named are notified of the meeting date.

### **Step 7 – Full Council Meeting**

- Held in confidential session.
- Council reviews evidence and deliberates.

### **Step 8 – Decision**

Council determines:

- Upheld / partially upheld / not upheld – reasons recorded.
- Actions required.

### **Step 9 – Outcome**

Written outcome issued to complainant within **10 working days** of the decision being made.

#### **Step 10 – Record-Keeping**

- Secure filing
- Complaints log updated

#### **Step 11 – Finality**

Decision of Full Council is final.

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### **9. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All complaints are handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Council’s Privacy Notice.

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### **10. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints**

The Council may restrict communication where behaviour is abusive, persistent, or unreasonable.

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### **11. Review**

This procedure will be reviewed every three years.

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## APPENDIX A

*FOR STAFFING COMMITTEE: Below is a **public-facing, resident-friendly version** of the Complaints Procedure, written in clear, accessible language suitable for the Holme Valley Parish Council website. It keeps the structure simple, avoids internal committee detail, and focuses on what residents need to know and how they can expect their complaint to be handled.*

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### **Holme Valley Parish Council – Complaints Procedure (Public Version)**

We want everyone who lives, works, or visits the Holme Valley to receive a high standard of service from the Parish Council. If something goes wrong, we want to hear about it so we can put things right and learn from the experience.

This page explains **how to make a complaint**, what you can expect from us, and how we will handle your concerns.

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### **What You Can Complain About**

You can use this procedure if your complaint is about:

- How the Council has carried out its work
  - A service, process, or administrative matter
  - The actions of a member of Council staff
  - A decision made by the Council or one of its committees
- 

### **What This Procedure Does Not Cover**

Some matters must follow different legal or statutory processes:

<b>Type of Issue</b>	<b>Where to Go</b>
Complaints about a parish councillor	Kirklees Council Monitoring Officer
Staff employment concerns	Council's Staff Grievance Procedure
Freedom of Information or Data Protection issues	FOI/Data Protection legislation

If you're unsure which route applies, we're happy to advise.

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### **Try an Informal Resolution First**

Many concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

You can contact the **Parish Clerk** to:

- Ask for information or clarification
- Raise a concern
- Discuss a problem you've experienced

We will always try to resolve issues at this early stage wherever possible.

If you still feel your concern has not been resolved, you can make a formal complaint.

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## How to Make a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints must be made **in writing**.

Please include:

- What happened
- When it happened
- Who was involved
- Any evidence you wish to provide
- What outcome you are seeking

Send your complaint to:

The Clerk  
Holme Valley Parish Council  
Holmfirth Civic Hall  
Huddersfield Road  
Holmfirth  
HD9 3AS

Or by email: [clerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk)

If your complaint is **about the Clerk**, please write to the **Chair of the Council** instead at the above address or via [admin@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk).

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **10 working days**.

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## How Your Complaint Will Be Handled

Once we receive your complaint, we will:

1. **Acknowledge it** and confirm whether it falls under this procedure.
2. **Decide who should consider it** – usually the Clerk, the Staffing Committee, or the Full Council, depending on the nature of the issue.
3. **Appoint an Investigation Lead and carry out an investigation**, which may include gathering information, speaking to those involved, and seeking professional advice where needed.
4. **Consider the findings** at a confidential meeting of the appropriate body.
5. **Make a decision** – your complaint may be upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
6. **Write to you with the outcome**, including any actions the Council will take.

We aim to deal with complaints as promptly as possible while ensuring a fair and thorough process.

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### **If You Are Not Satisfied With the Outcome**

If your complaint was considered by the Staffing Committee, you may appeal to the **Full Council** within **20 working days** of receiving the decision.

The decision of the Full Council is final.

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### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All complaints are handled sensitively and in line with UK GDPR. Information is only shared where necessary to investigate and resolve the matter.

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### **Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints**

We are committed to treating everyone with respect. In return, we expect the same. The Council may limit contact where behaviour becomes abusive, persistent, or unreasonable.

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### **Reviewing This Procedure**

The Council reviews its Complaints Procedure every **three years** to ensure it remains fair, clear, and effective.

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## APPENDIX B

*STAFFING COMMITTEE: A practical, ready-to-use checklist for internal use.*

### Checklist for the Investigation Lead

#### 1. Before the Investigation Begins

- Confirm appointment as Investigation Lead
- Receive full complaint documentation
- Check for any personal conflict of interest
- Review the scope of the investigation as agreed by Clerk/Chair/Committee
- Clarify timelines and reporting expectations
- Confirm confidentiality requirements and data-handling rules

#### 2. Planning the Investigation

- Identify key issues to be investigated
- List individuals to be interviewed
- Identify documents, emails, or records required
- Prepare interview questions
- Arrange interview times and locations (ensuring privacy)
- Ensure all parties understand the process and their rights

#### 3. Conducting the Investigation

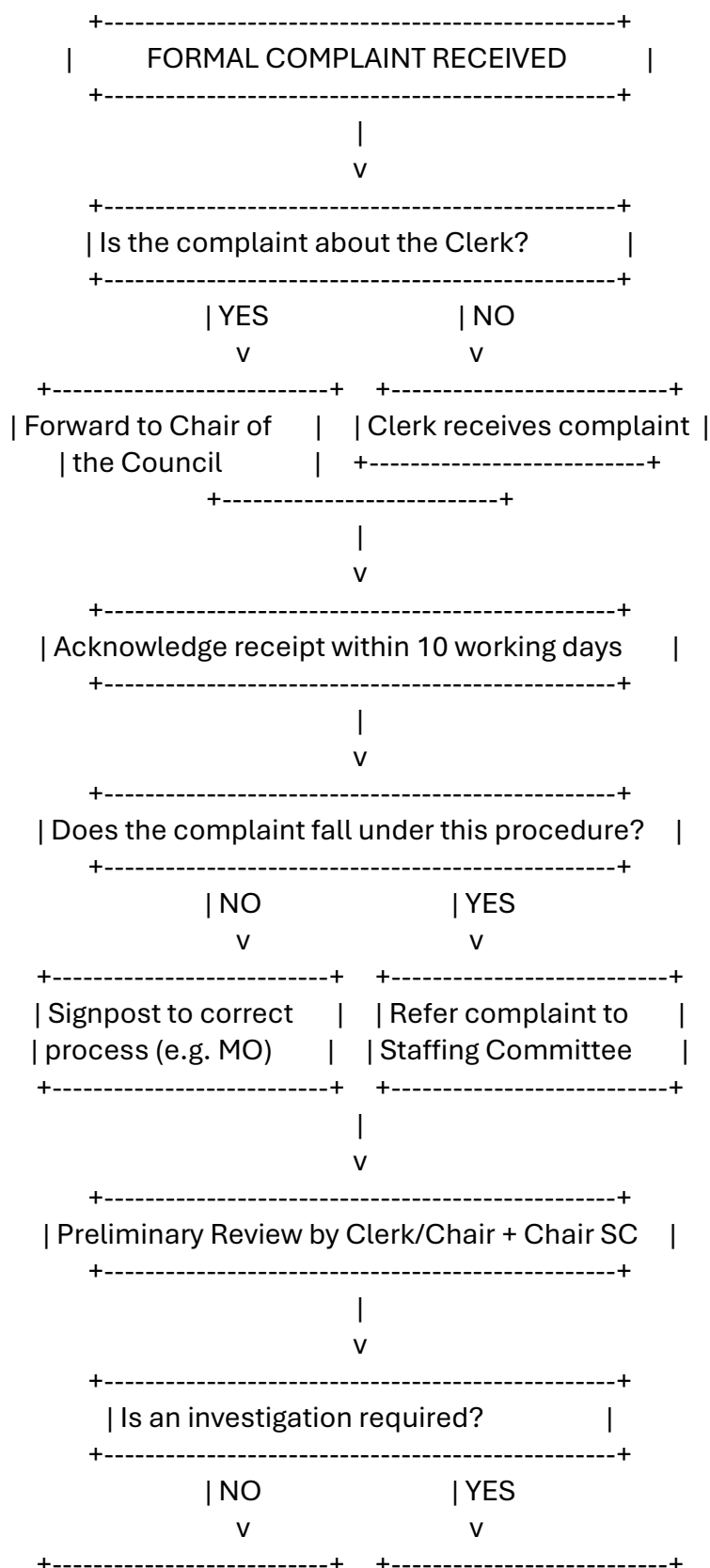
- Gather all relevant documents and evidence
- Conduct interviews with:
  - Complainant
  - Staff member(s) named
  - Witnesses (if any)
- Keep clear, dated notes of all interviews
- Maintain an action log for reporting to the Committee/Council
- Seek HR/legal advice where appropriate
- Ensure impartiality throughout

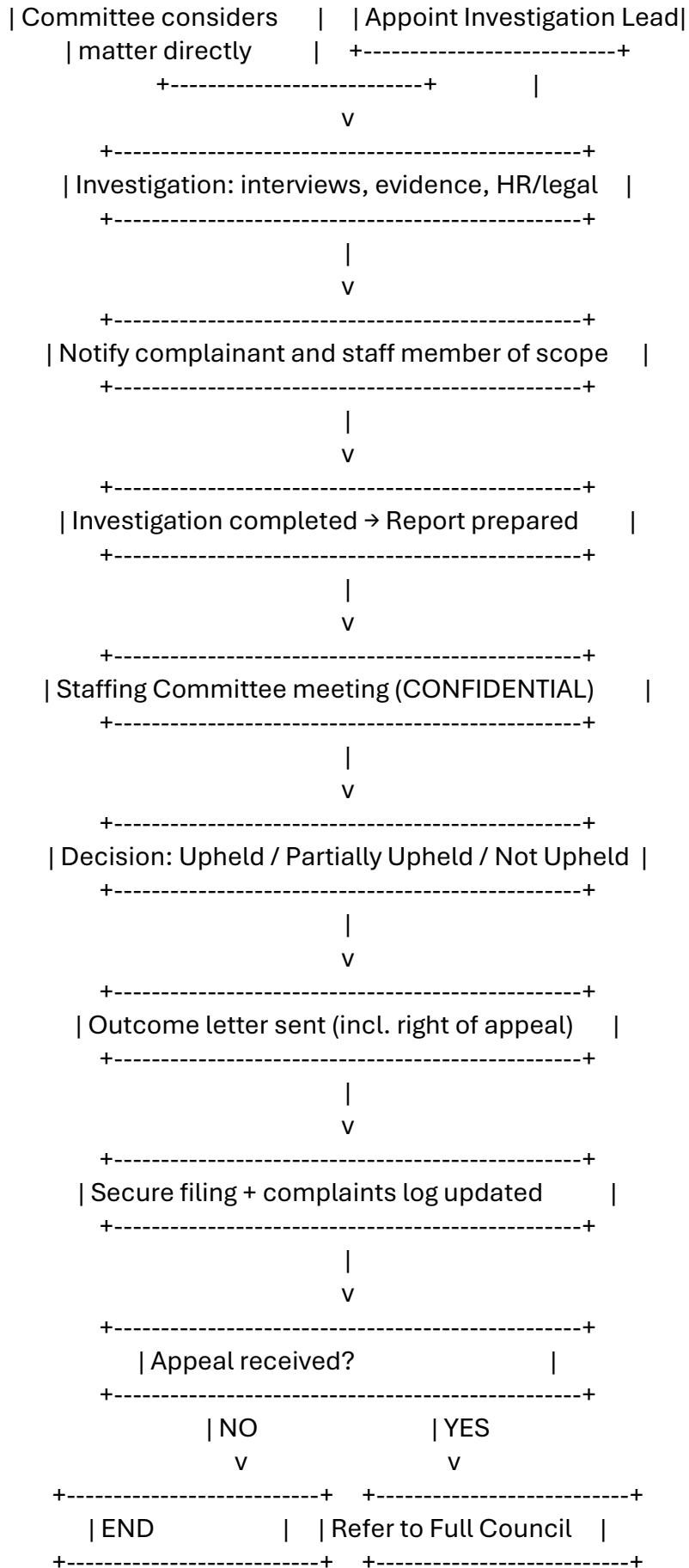
#### 4. Preparing the Investigation Report

- Summarise the complaint
-

**APPENDIX C**

**Flowchart: Complaint Considered by the Staffing Committee**

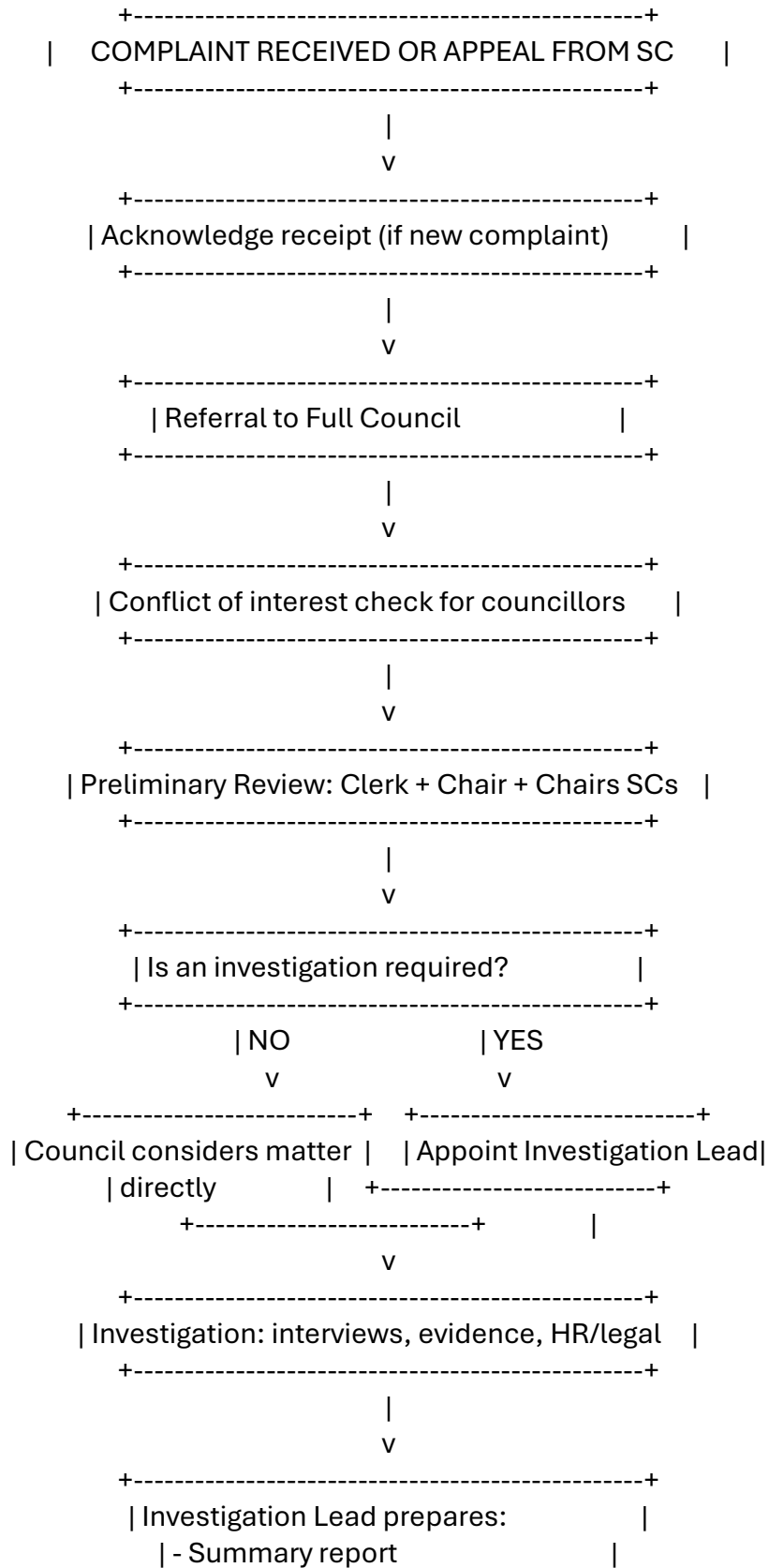


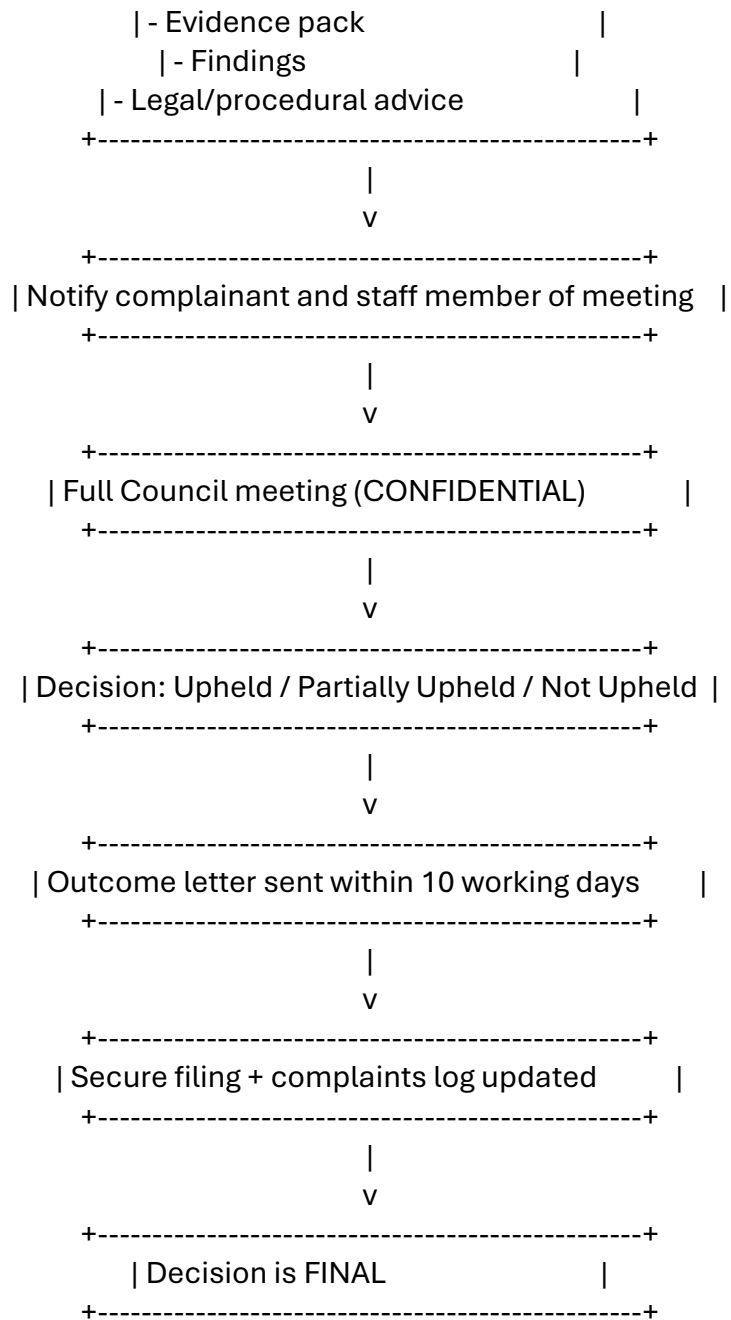




**APPENDIX D**

**Flowchart: Complaint Considered by Full Council**





## APPENDIX E

### One-Page Staff Guide: Handling Complaints

#### HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL – STAFF QUICK GUIDE

This one-page guide summarises what staff must do when a complaint is received.

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#### 1. First Steps

- Be polite, calm, and professional.
  - Listen carefully and avoid defensiveness.
  - If the issue can be resolved informally, try to do so.
  - If the complainant wants to make a formal complaint, advise them to submit it in writing.
- 

#### 2. Receiving a Formal Complaint

- Formal complaints must be **in writing**.
  - If the complaint is about the **Clerk**, forward it immediately to the **Chair of the Council**.
  - Acknowledge receipt within **10 working days**.
  - Check whether the complaint falls under the Council’s Complaints Procedure.
  - If not, signpost to the correct route (e.g., Monitoring Officer for councillor complaints).
- 

#### 3. Allocating the Complaint

Depending on the subject matter, the complaint will be handled by:

- **The Clerk**
- **The Staffing Committee**
- **Full Council**

Staff must not pre-judge or comment on where a complaint “should” go — this is determined by the Clerk/Chair.

---

#### 4. During an Investigation

If an Investigation Lead is appointed:

- Provide access to relevant documents and records.
  - Cooperate fully and promptly with requests for information.
  - Maintain confidentiality at all times.
  - Do not discuss the complaint with colleagues unless authorised.
  - Treat all parties with respect and neutrality.
- 

## 5. Meetings and Hearings

- Staffing Committee and Full Council consider complaints in **confidential session**.
  - Staff may be asked to provide information or attend an interview.
  - Staff should not attempt to influence the process or contact councillors about the complaint.
- 

## 6. After the Decision

- The complainant receives a written outcome.
  - Staff may receive a confidential summary if relevant.
  - All documents must be securely filed.
  - Staff must not share or discuss outcomes outside the authorised process.
- 

## 7. Key Principles

- Confidentiality
  - Impartiality
  - Respect
  - Timeliness
  - Accurate record-keeping
- 

ENDS.

# HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

### VERSION CONTROL

Based on NALC Model Policy released 2025-12-08.

Date of policy:

Approved by:

Meeting date and minute reference:

Policy version reference:

Supersedes: [Name of old policy and reference]

Policy effective from:

Date for next review:

### Important notice

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small council, adhering to statutory minimum requirements, and does not constitute legal advice from NALC. As with all policies, it should be consistent with HVPC terms and conditions of employment.

This model document was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for the purpose of its members. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at the time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

**Draft Policy Version 1 for consideration by the Staffing Committee on 13 April 2026**

## Introduction

1. This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice.
2. It also takes into account the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work.
3. The policy is designed to help council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their jobs. Wherever possible, the council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.
4. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
5. This policy confirms:
  - i. Informal coaching and supervision will be considered, where appropriate, to improve conduct and/or attendance.
  - ii. The council will fully investigate the facts of each case.
  - iii. The council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective. For more information, see ACAS Performance Management.
  - iv. Employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case.
  - v. Employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing.
  - vi. Employees may be accompanied or represented by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official - at any investigatory, disciplinary or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
  - vii. The council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. Employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend. Failure

- to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make written submissions.
- viii. If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within seven calendar days of the original meeting date, unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date.
  - ix. Any changes to specified time limits in the council's procedure must be agreed to by the employee and the council.
  - x. Information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
  - xi. Audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
  - xii. Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision. The appeal decision is final.
  - xiii. If an employee who is already subject to the council's disciplinary procedure raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure.
  - xiv. Disciplinary action taken by the council can include a written warning, a final written warning or dismissal.
  - xv. This procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this.
  - xvi. Except for gross misconduct, when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct.
  - xvii. If an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it.
  - xviii. The council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example, where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the consent of affected parties.

## **Examples of misconduct**

6. Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct (the list is not exhaustive):
  - i. Unauthorised absence.
  - ii. Poor timekeeping.
  - iii. Misuse of the council's resources and facilities, including telephone, email and internet.
  - iv. Inappropriate behaviour.
  - v. Refusal to follow reasonable instructions.
  - vi. Breach of health and safety rules.

## **Examples of gross misconduct**

7. Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct (the list is not exhaustive):
  - i. Bullying, discrimination and harassment.
  - ii. Incapacity at work because of alcohol or drugs.
  - iii. Violent behaviour.
  - iv. Fraud or theft.
  - v. Gross negligence.
  - vi. Gross insubordination.
  - vii. Serious breaches of council policies and procedures, e.g. the Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection Policy and any policies regarding the use of information technology.
  - viii. Serious and deliberate damage to property.
  - ix. Use of the internet or email to access pornographic, obscene or offensive material.
  - x. Disclosure of confidential information.

## **Suspension**

8. If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may suspend the employee while further investigations are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.
9. While on suspension, the employee is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council needs to make contact. The employee

must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.

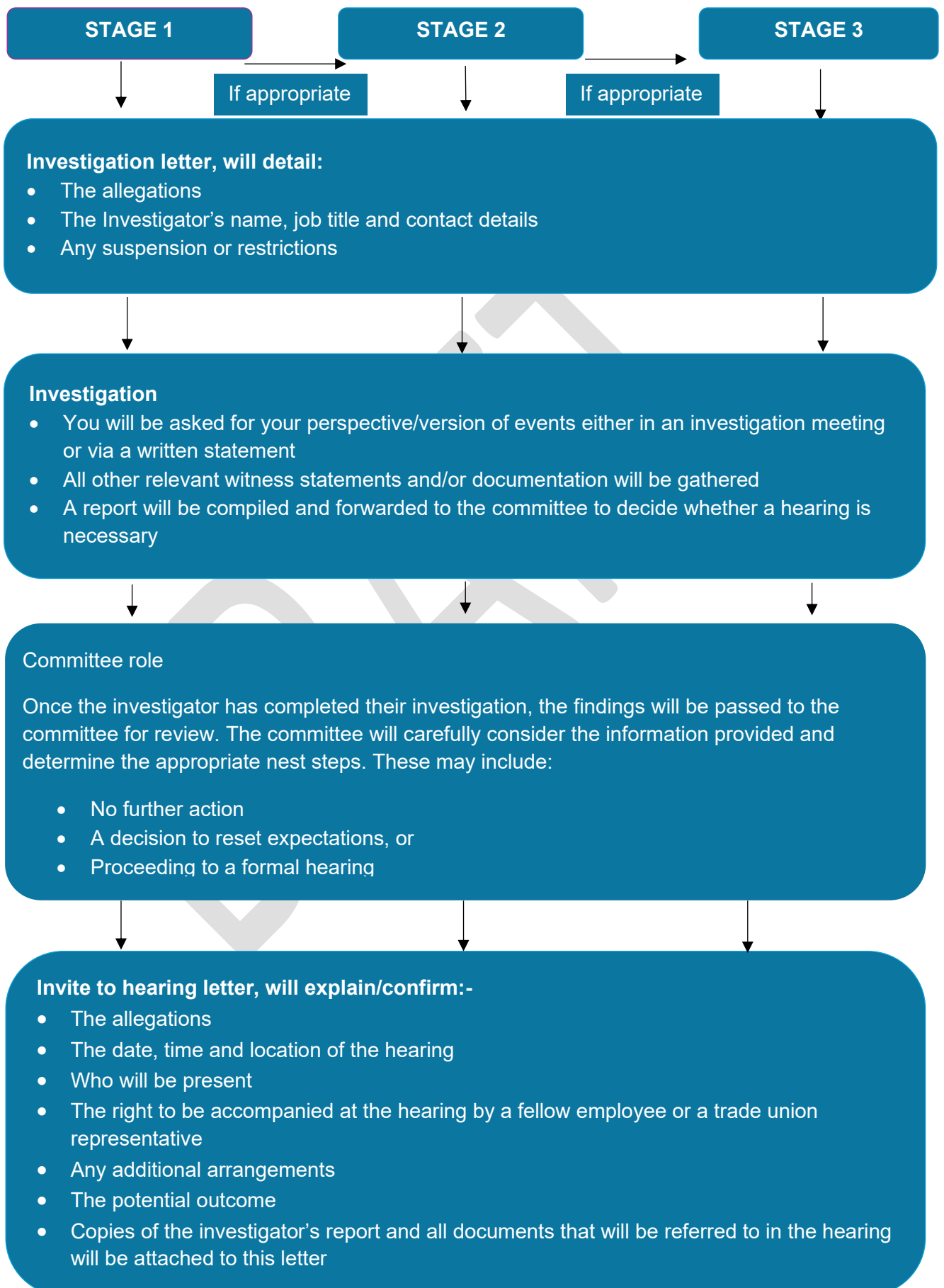
10. The employee must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

**Examples of unsatisfactory work performance**

11. The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance (the list is not exhaustive):

- i. Inadequate application of management instructions/office procedures.
- ii. Inadequate IT skills.
- iii. Unsatisfactory management of staff.
- iv. Unsatisfactory communication skills.

## The procedure



## The Hearing

- An appropriate level of management will conduct the disciplinary hearing ('the Chair'), and there may also be a note-taker present. In some cases, a Human Resources Partner will also be present
- The Chair will explain the role of all those in attendance, the allegations and go through the evidence that has been gathered
- You will be given the opportunity to respond in full. This will include time to ask questions and present evidence. If you intend to call any witnesses, you must give us advance written notice that you intend to do this
- The Chair will adjourn at the end to consider their decision
- Where possible, the outcome will be given the same day. Where this is not possible, because for example, the Chair requires further time to consider their decision or complete further investigation, you will be informed
- You will be informed of the outcome verbally (either in person or by phone) and then in writing

**Potential outcome:  
First Written  
warning**

**Potential outcome:  
Final Written  
warning**

**Potential outcome:  
Dismissal (with or  
without notice/pay  
in lieu of notice)**

### **Outcome letter will advise:**

- The nature of the misconduct that has led to the outcome (including any prior warnings that have been taken into account, if appropriate)
- The action or improvement required
- The timescale for implementing such action (if relevant)
- That this is a first/final written warning and that the next stage may be final written warning/dismissal if there is no sustained improvement or change
- That the warning will remain live for 12 months
- That whilst the warning will not remain active after this time in relation to future disciplinary matters, a record of what has occurred will be kept and may be referred to if relevant
- The right of appeal

### **Outcome letter will advise:**

- The reasons for dismissal
- Any prior warnings that have been taken into account, if appropriate
- The date on which employment will end
- The right of appeal

12. Preliminary enquiries. The council may make preliminary enquiries to establish the basic facts of what has happened in order to understand whether there may be a case to answer under the disciplinary procedure.
13. If the employee's manager believes there may be a disciplinary case to answer, the council may initiate a more detailed investigation undertaken to establish the facts of a situation or to establish the perspective of others who may have witnessed misconduct.
14. Informal Procedures. Where minor concerns about conduct become apparent, it is the manager's responsibility to raise this with the employee and clarify the improvements required. A file note will be made and kept by the manager. The informal discussions are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. If the conduct fails to improve, or if further matters of conduct become apparent, the manager may decide to formalise the discussions and invite the employee to a first stage disciplinary hearing.

### **Disciplinary investigation**

15. A formal disciplinary investigation may sometimes be required to establish the facts and whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.
16. If a formal disciplinary investigation is required, the Council's Staffing Committee will appoint an Investigator who will be responsible for undertaking a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The Investigator will be independent and will normally be a councillor. If the Staffing Committee considers that there are no councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council. The Investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Staffing Committee will inform the Investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should specify:
  - i. The allegations or events that the investigation is required to examine.
  - ii. Whether a recommendation is required
  - iii. How the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a written report.
  - iv. Who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.
17. The Investigator will be asked to submit their findings, usually within 35 Calendar days of appointment, where possible. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory

performance or of allegations of minor misconduct, the appointment of an investigator may not be necessary and the Council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage - the disciplinary meeting (see paragraph 22).

18. The Staffing Committee will notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and details of the person undertaking the investigation. The employee may be asked to meet an investigator as part of the disciplinary investigation. The employee will be given sufficient notice of the meeting with the Investigator so that they have a reasonable time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of that process. The employee will be provided with a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure. The Council will also inform the employee that when they meet with the Investigator, they will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.
19. Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting.
20. If there are other persons (e.g. employees, councillors, members of the public or the council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the Investigator should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.
21. The Investigator has no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the Staffing Committee whether or not disciplinary action should be considered under the policy.
22. The Investigator's report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:
  - i. The employee has no case to answer, and there should be no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
  - ii. The matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally.
  - iii. The employee has a case to answer, and a formal hearing should be convened under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
23. The Investigator will submit the report to the Staffing Committee, which will decide whether there is no case to answer; the matter should be considered informally, or a formal Disciplinary Hearing should be convened. If the Investigator is a member of the Committee making the decision, they should

recuse themselves from any formal votes or decision-making regarding their findings as to whether there is a case to answer at a Disciplinary Hearing.

24. If the Council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

### **The disciplinary meeting**

25. If the Staffing Committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a Staffing Sub-committee of three councillors to formally hear the allegations. The Staffing Sub-committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. The Investigator shall not sit on the Sub-committee. The Staffing Sub-committee will be given the delegated authority to make a decision in relation to the Disciplinary.

26. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the Sub-committee. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The Sub-committee's letter will confirm the following:

- i. The names of its chair and the other two members.
- ii. Details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting.
- iii. A copy of the information provided to the Sub-committee, which may include the investigation report, supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- iv. The time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that they have sufficient time to prepare for it.
- v. Whether witnesses may attend on the employee's and the Council's behalf, and if they may, both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least two working days before the meeting.
- vi. The employee may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

27. The purpose of the disciplinary meeting hearing is for the allegations to be put to the employee and then for the employee to give their perspective. It will be conducted as follows:

- i. The Chair will introduce the members of the Sub-committee to the employee and explain the arrangements for the hearing.
- ii. The Chair will set out the allegations and invite the Investigator to present the findings of the investigation report (if there has been a previous investigation).

- iii. The Chair will invite the employee to present their account.
- iv. The employee (or the companion) will set out their case and present evidence (including any witnesses and/or witness statements).
- v. Any member of the Sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the Investigator and any witness.
- vi. The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up.

28. The Chair will provide the employee with the Sub-committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The Chair will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision in the event that formal action is taken.

29. The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be further investigated by the sub-committee.

### **Disciplinary action**

30. If the Sub-committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

First written warning:

31. If the employee's conduct has fallen below acceptable standards, a first written warning will be issued. A first written warning will set out:

- i. The reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement.
- ii. That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action.
- iii. The employee's right of appeal.
- iv. That a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Final written warning:

32. If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve sufficiently during the currency of a prior warning, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- i. The reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement.
- ii. That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- iii. The employee's right of appeal.
- iv. That a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Dismissal:

33. The Council may dismiss:

- i. For gross misconduct.
- ii. If there is no improvement within the specified time period, in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning.
- iii. If another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force.

34. The Council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, they will receive a written statement of the reasons for their dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of their right of appeal. If the Sub-committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action taken as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal:

35. An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. Their written notice of appeal must be received by the Council within seven calendar days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.

36. The grounds for appeal include:

- i. A failure by the Council to follow its disciplinary policy.
- ii. The Sub-committee did not support the Sub-committee's disciplinary decision.
- iii. The disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case.
- iv. New evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting.

37. Where possible, the appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the Investigator. There may be insufficient members of the Staffing Committee who

have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of 3 members of the Council who may include members of the Staffing Committee. The appeal panel will appoint a chair from one of its members.

38. The employee will be notified, in writing, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

39. At the appeal meeting, the chair will:

- i. Introduce the panel members to the employee.
- ii. Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the disciplinary decision.
- iii. Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.

40. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds for appeal.

41. The chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.

42. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the disciplinary decision of the staffing committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

43. If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved.

44. The appeal panel's decision is final.

ENDS.

# HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## GRIEVANCE POLICY

### VERSION CONTROL

Based on NALC Model Policy released 2024-08-09.

Date of policy:

Approved by:

Meeting date and minute reference:

Policy version reference:

Supersedes: [Name of old policy and reference]

Policy effective from:

Date for next review:

**Draft Policy Version 1 for consideration by the Staffing  
Committee on 13 April 2026**

## 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>).
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)).
3. It also takes into account relevant law affecting Councils.
4. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
5. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.
6. This policy confirms:
  - i. employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for their grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining their case.
  - ii. the Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date.
  - iii. any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council.
  - iv. an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final.

- v. information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- vi. audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
- vii. if an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure.
- viii. if a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if they raised the grievance in good faith.
- ix. the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties.
- x. Employees can only use all stages of the grievance procedure if the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure (paragraph 4) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a councillor. Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. If the complaint about the councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of Holme Valley Parish Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure (see paragraph 5).
- xi. the Council may engage external investigators, grievance or Appeal Panels for the purposes of the process.
- xii. if the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination.

xiii. if an employee considers that the grievance concerns their safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with their line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime.

### **Informal grievance procedure**

7. The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with their manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with their manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chair of the Staffing Committee or, if appropriate, another member of the Staffing Committee. If the employee's complaint is about a councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the councillor's consent.

### **Formal grievance procedure**

8. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Staffing Committee.
9. The Staffing Committee will appoint a Sub-committee of 3 members to hear the grievance in the event that the grievance is raised by or relates to the Clerk. Where the grievance is not raised by or relates to the Clerk, the Staffing Committee may appoint the Clerk to hear the Grievance. The Sub-committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the Sub-committee.

### **Investigation**

10. If the Sub-committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigator may be an appropriate employee, councillor or external party. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, councillors or members of the public).

11. The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the Sub-committee.

### **Notification**

12. Within 14 calendar days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:
  - i. the names of its Chair and other members.
  - ii. the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 35 calendar days of when the Council received the grievance.
  - iii. the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
  - iv. a copy of the Council's grievance policy.
  - v. confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of their witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting.
  - vi. confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice.
  - vii. findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation.
  - viii. an invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).

### **The grievance meeting**

13. At the grievance meeting:
  - i. the Chair will introduce the members of the Sub-committee to the employee.
  - ii. the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence.
  - iii. the Chair will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action the employee wants the Council to take.
  - iv. any member of the Sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness.
  - v. the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case.

- vi. a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the Sub-committee.
14. The Chair will provide the employee with the Sub-committee's decision, in writing, usually within 7 calendar days of the meeting though may be longer e.g. where further investigations are required. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

### **The appeal**

15. If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the Sub-committee, they may submit a written appeal to the Staffing Committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within 7 calendar days of the employee receiving the Sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.
16. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:
- i. a failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy.
  - ii. the decision was not supported by the evidence.
  - iii. the action proposed by the Sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate.
  - iv. new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.
17. The appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the Appeal Panel will be a committee of three Council members who may include members of the Staffing Committee. The Council may engage external parties if there are insufficient councillors to form the panel. The Appeal Panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.
18. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 14 calendar days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 35 calendar days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
19. At the appeal meeting, the Chair will:
- i. introduce the panel members to the employee.
  - ii. explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the staffing Sub-committee.
  - iii. explain the action that the Appeal Panel may take.
20. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.

21. The Chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, and when they are likely to receive the letter. This may be within 14 calendar days of the appeal meeting; this may be longer where further investigations are required.
22. The Appeal Panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Staffing Committee or substitute its own decision.
23. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

ENDS.

DRAFT

## HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL: SYSTEMS & WORKFLOW DISCOVERY (PHASE 1 OVERVIEW)

*Initial scoping & opportunities for efficiency, synergy and modernisation*

### Top-Line Summary - What We Want to Review

- How we process finance (invoice workflow, approvals, duplication, filing)
- How we prepare agendas and meeting papers
- How we store, share and organise files
- How we schedule and coordinate meetings and Civic room bookings
- How we handle communications (website, social media, video)
- How we support projects, grants and working groups
- How we manage HR records, risk assessments and policies
- How we can reduce paper use, duplication and manual workload
- Where automation or small digital tools could help
- What we may need from future systems (e.g., calendars, collaboration, phone setup)

### What Systems & Tools We Currently Use - Core Systems

- Dropbox – file storage
- Vision ICT (IMAP) – email
- Rialtas – accounting
- Excel – cashbook + tracking sheets
- Unity Trust Bank – digital payment approval
- WordPress (Zonkey) – website
- Word / PDF – agendas, minutes, reports

### Communications

- Facebook – news & updates
- YouTube – meeting videos
- (*Instagram pending*)
- Video recording on phone/iPad and manual editing

### Hardware

- Windows laptops (several old)
- iPad (rarely used)
- Office landline with basic voicemail
- Printer/copier contract
- BT office broadband

### What We'll Be Looking At

- Where processes are duplicated (especially finance & agendas)
- Where steps can move from paper to digital
- How to introduce simple shared calendars
- Whether to continue with Dropbox or move toward Microsoft 365
- Opportunities for automating small tasks (planning lists, social scheduling, video trimming)
- Improving grants forms and other public-facing processes
- Whether the phone system needs updating
- How to strengthen audit trails while reducing admin
- Long-term options for more integrated working

## **1. Current Operational Areas & Systems**

### **1.1 Governance & Meetings**

- Full Council (bi-monthly), Finance & Management (6/yr), Service Provision (4–5/yr), Staffing (~3/yr), Planning (alternate monthly – full vs applications only).
- Multiple active Working Groups: The Civic (as landlord), Communications & Engagement, Transport, Grants, others periodically.
- Agenda prep & paper collation heavy — large packs can run into hundreds of pages
- Video recording of meetings:
  - Long sessions (≈2 hrs) → long processing times if editing is needed
  - Sound/visibility issues due to room layout
- No shared calendars (including syncing with the Civic room bookings).

### **1.2 Planning Support**

- Monthly planning lists compiled manually from individual Kirklees notifications.
- Time-consuming and repetitive → *strong automation candidate*.

### **1.3 Service Provision**

- Physical assets managed by contractor: war memorials, allotment, closed churchyard etc.
- Inspections, risk assessments, contractor documents stored manually in Dropbox.

### **1.4 Communications & Engagement**

- Website: WordPress, theme + plugins controlled by Zonkey; content updated by GS.
- Social media: Facebook (primary), YouTube (meetings), Instagram planned.
- Scheduling/monitoring is manual.
- Video editing/uploading slow due to file size and processing.
- Brand-asset library and reusable templates built in Canva – limited but development could continue.

### **1.5 Projects, Grants & Working Groups**

- Managed largely via Word tables, spreadsheets and Dropbox folders.
- Grants require attachments in varied formats; current application process is difficult on phones/mobile devices.

### **1.6 HR & Admin**

- HR records, staff policies and risk assessments all stored in Dropbox.
- Hard copies of minutes & finance records must also be kept for set number of years (most are in archive).
- One office phone with basic answerphone.
- Staff provide personal mobile numbers to councillors; no centralised phone system.
- No call recording, logging, call routing, or forwarding controls.

### **1.7 Hardware, Email & Storage**

- All staff on Windows laptops (several old; one being replaced).
- One underused iPad.
- Email via Vision ICT (IMAP).
- Dropbox effectively the only file system → not integrated with Microsoft 365 → no shared calendar, no collaborative editing.
- Wi-Fi: BT office router; personal routers at home.
- Backups reliant on providers' cloud systems.

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## **2. Finance Workflows – Updated Critical Area**

**Finance is the most duplicated and manually intensive workflow.**

### **2.1 Tools Used**

- Rialtas – official ledger
- Excel cashbook – manually maintained duplicate
- Unity Trust Bank – digital approvals
- Paper coversheets + manual annotation
- Email + Dropbox for scans and archiving

### **2.2 End-to-End Workflow (Updated & Accurate)**

1. Invoice arrives (email or post).
2. Invoice printed + manual top/cover sheet attached.
3. Staff annotate: minute number/delegated authority, cost code, EMR etc.
4. Rich physically signs the purchase order or coversheet to authorise/confirm payment.
5. Details manually entered into Excel cashbook.
6. Payee set up in Unity Trust (if new).
7. Rich prepares summary of payments + scans of invoices and coversheets; sends to signatories.
8. Two councillors approve payments digitally via Unity Trust.
9. Monthly list of payments goes to F&M/Full Council to note; items over £500 require approval.
10. Same details re-entered into Rialtas (full duplication).
11. Paper files stored for quarterly internal controls and eventual archive.

## **3. Observations – Where Inefficiencies Sit**

### **3.1 Finance is significantly over-engineered**

- Duplicate bookkeeping (Excel + Rialtas)
- Paper for annotation → then scanned → then saved
- Physical signatures despite digital authorisation process
- Triple-handling of the same information
- High time cost per invoice
- Audit requirements do not mandate this level of paper

### **3.2 Meeting paper production is heavyweight**

- Reports arrive inconsistently
- Manual file renaming
- Manual merging of PDFs
- Manual indexing
- Repeated steps across committees

### **3.3 Coordination suffers from lack of shared systems**

- No shared calendars
- Civic room bookings not integrated
- Councillors work in isolation using email threads
- No central workflow for committee cycles

### **3.4 Communications have no automation**

- Socials posted manually

- Meetings recorded via phone → time-heavy uploading
- No brand library or templates
- Website updates are structured but not automated

### 3.5 Planning list is a minor but repetitive task

- Not a major time drain
- But low-hanging fruit for automation

### 3.6 Public forms (especially grants) are outdated

- Not mobile-friendly
- Cannot save progress
- Harder for older or less digital groups

## 4. Pain Points → Opportunity Analysis

Pain Point	Suggested Fix	Cost	Benefit
Duplicate finance entry (Excel + Rialtas)	Use Rialtas as sole ledger; digital annotations/signatures	£0	Huge time saving; fewer errors
Paper-based invoice workflow	PDF coversheets; digital sign-off; digital internal controls	£0	Reduced printing & handling
Heavy agenda pack creation	Template merging; structured committee cycle folders	£0	Faster, more consistent
No shared calendars	Introduce Microsoft 365 or lightweight alternative	Low	Better coordination
Meeting video processing slow	Standardised workflow + auto-trim tools	Low	Fewer staff hours
Social media repetitive	Meta Business Suite scheduling	£0	Less time monitoring
Grants form outdated	Gravity Forms / MS Forms with attachments	Low	Accessible + user-friendly
Planning list manual	Email parsing / scraper	£0–£50	Small but tidy efficiency gain
Civic room bookings disjointed	Shared calendar or 365 integration	Low	Fewer clashes
File system inconsistent	Standardised Dropbox structure	£0	Faster file finding + audit clarity

## 5. Opportunities for Efficiency & Modernisation

### 5.1 Quick Wins (0–3 months)

- Fully digitise invoice approval workflow
- Remove duplicate Excel cashbook entry
- Standardise finance folders for audit
- Create shared calendars (staff + Civic)
- Set up Meta Business Suite for socials
- Standardise Dropbox layout
- Improve meeting video workflow (auto-trim, consistent device)
- Tidy planning list generation (optional)

## **5.2 Medium-Term Improvements (3–12 months)**

- Migrate staff + councillors to Microsoft 365 (Teams, SharePoint, calendars)
- Modernise grants form (mobile-friendly, save-and-continue, attachments)
- Upgrade to VoIP phone system (routing, voicemail-to-email, DND)
- Introduce lightweight project tracking tool
- Work with Zonkey on:
  - Gravity Forms
  - automated publishing
  - better meeting doc structure

## **5.3 Longer-Term Options (12+ months)**

- Website restructure if required
- Asset/contractor management system
- AI-assisted drafting (minutes, complaint triage, enquiry summaries)
- Full digital maturity review

## **6. Why Modernisation Is Needed**

- Current workflows contain avoidable duplication, especially in finance and meetings.
- Reliance on paper where digital workflows are fully permissible.
- Dropbox + IMAP + WordPress works but lacks integration or synergy.
- Improvements will deliver:
  - Reduced workload
  - Increased resilience
  - Better audit clarity
  - Lower printing/hardware cost
  - Improved hybrid working
- Many fixes are low/no cost.

## **7. Recommended Direction of Travel**

1. Fix core inefficiencies (finance, meetings, coordination).
2. Build better digital infrastructure (calendars, file structure, communications).
3. Improve public-facing processes (grants, socials, forms).
4. Consider Microsoft 365 for long-term integration.
5. Evaluate strategic upgrades (phone system, asset tracking).