Review Date	13 May 2026 09/26-27h
Next Review	May 2027

Holmesfield Parish Council
Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

Introduction
Holmesfield Parish Council is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment free from sexual harassment. We believe all employees have the right to work in an environment that promotes equality, dignity, and respect. This policy complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, reflecting our commitment to preventing sexual harassment in the workplace.

Scope
This policy applies to all employees, councillors and anyone under a contractual or employment relationship with Holmesfield Parish Council. It extends to all council premises, work-related events, business trips, and any situation where the individual is representing Holmesfield Parish Council.

Definition of Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment is defined as conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment; and less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of or submission to sexual conduct.
This can include, but is not limited to:
• unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours;
• unwanted physical contact;
• suggestive comments or gestures;
• displaying sexually explicit materials in the workplace;
• any other behaviour of a sexual nature that an individual finds offensive.

Examples of Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment takes many forms. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:
• physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome physical contact or intimidation;
• persistent suggestions to meet up socially after a person has made it clear they do not welcome such suggestions;
• showing or sending offensive or pornographic material by any means (e.g., by text, video clip, email, or by posting on the internet or social media);
• unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, suggestive remarks, or gender-related insults;
• offensive comments about appearance or dress, innuendo, or lewd comments;
• leering, whistling, or making sexually suggestive gestures; and
• gossip and speculation about someone's sexual orientation or transgender status, including spreading malicious rumours.

Responsibility

All employees and councillors at Holmesfield Parish Council are responsible for upholding this policy and should refrain from engaging in any form of sexual harassment.

Reporting Mechanism

Holmesfield Parish Council encourages any employee who feels they have been subjected to sexual harassment to report the incident as soon as possible. Reports can be made to the Clerk or any Councillor.

All reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Holmesfield Parish Council will promptly conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. The individual accused of harassment will also have an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Both parties may be accompanied by a representative or colleague during any meetings or hearings related to the investigation.

Disciplinary Action

If sexual harassment is confirmed, Holmesfield Parish Council will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include a warning, additional training, reassignment, suspension, or termination of employment, depending on the severity of the conduct.

Protection Against Retaliation

Holmesfield Parish Council prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in the investigation process. Any form of retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains compliant with current laws and reflects best practices in preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

Acknowledgment

All employees and councillors are required to read, understand, and adhere to this policy. By continuing your service at Holmesfield Parish Council, you agree to comply with this Sexual Harassment Policy and to take an active role in maintaining a workplace free from harassment.