

Cotesbach Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

This policy enables Cotesbach Parish Council to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe adults, who may be at risk, children and young people in the community.

Policy Statement

The policy allows for councillors to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. It will enable the Parish Council to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations of abuse, or suspicions of it, are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing the abuse is supported.

Definitions

Child

“Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday”. Children Act 1989.

Adults at Risk

An individual who “Has needs for care and support, and due to those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect”. Care Act 2014.

Related Policies

This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the following Parish Council policies: Equality and Diversity, Data Protection, Complaints Policy and any others deemed appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Parish Council

- To accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a Duty of Care for children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse.
- To raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing and identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that all councillors, volunteers and any paid members of staff are familiar with the policy and any associated procedures.
- To act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adults before sharing information about them with another agency. The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent.
- To make a safeguarding referral to Customer First as appropriate i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
- To ensure that all new Councillors are provided with a copy of the safeguarding policy.
- To ensure all contractors/partners working directly with the Parish Council meets the safeguarding standards as expected by the Parish Council (A copy of the safeguarding policy must be given to any contractor/partner).

- To require all Councillors/volunteers and anyone paid to adopt and abide by this safeguarding policy and to understand their responsibilities therein.
- To monitor and evaluate the policy annually or in the light of any changes to Government legislation and guidance.
- To ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that everyone is safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides or facilitates.
- To ensure records are kept of any referrals and any notes, records of conversations concerning that referral are kept in the folder and that it is stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people.

Responding to Abuse or an Allegation

- Reassure the person concerned and listen to what they are saying.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed probing questions.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Tell the child, or adult at risk, what you are going to do next to get help to keep him/her safe.
- Comply with the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy.

Recording an Allegation

- Use the adult at risk/child's words where possible.
- Record what they are saying.
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.

Types of Abuse

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. It is important to note that self-neglect is part of neglect. Adults may also experience financial abuse.

Allegations Made Against a Councillor/Volunteer/Paid Member of Staff

This should be reported to the clerk/ Chairman. If appropriate, they will consult with/make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Making a Referral

Please dial 999 if the person is in immediate danger.

Reviewed and approved at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 12th May 2026; minute 7