

POLICY: EMPLOYMENT

PURPOSE: To set out the significant terms of employment for Melbourn Parish Council staff

SCOPE: Employment Terms for paid staff. Most detailed policies and procedures are set out in other published Parish Council documents. This policy provides overview only. Excludes Contractors & Service Providers.

GENERAL POLICY: It is the policy of the Melbourn Parish Council to employ staff under clear terms and conditions as outlined in this document.

INDIVIDUAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES:**1. Equality & Diversity**

The Melbourn Parish Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all Staff, Service Providers and Councillors. This commitment also extends to all members of the public with which it has direct or indirect contact through day-to-day business. For details refer to Policy 5.02 Equality & Diversity.

2. Recruitment

Vacancies for Staff shall be advertised upon the Notice Boards and the website. **In general recruitment will be through open competition and vacancies for staff will be advertised as appropriate to their nature. Under some circumstances, the Council may make a case for not going to open competition.** The Council's Human Resources Panel will conduct the process and interview candidates. Final decisions rest with the full Council. For details refer to Policy 5.13 Recruitment.

3. Performance Appraisals

It is the policy of Melbourn Parish Council to conduct staff appraisals at least annually, with the objective of achieving open dialogue on progress and problems, together with an assessment of any goals or targets that may have been agreed. For details refer to Policy 5.11 Staff Appraisals.

4. Review of Salaries

Staff Salaries will be reviewed annually as part of the precept-setting exercise during November. All staff salaries will be set by reference to National Association of Local Councils (NALC) annually published pay scales. NALC pay scales are normally adjusted annually for inflation and also contain scope for progression through the scales. For details refer to Policy 5.12 Salary Review.

5. Grievance

Melbourn Parish Council is committed to resolving all grievances where an employee suffers or perceives they have suffered treatment or conditions that violate the legal and/or moral contract between these parties. Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with Us, the Melbourn Parish Council. It is hoped that most issues can be dealt with by informal discussion between people and their immediate manager. If this proves impossible a formal procedure sets out clear rules and processes for handling grievance situations fairly and transparently.

Our policy is to encourage and maintain good relationships between and our employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. The Procedure 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 and our Equality and Diversity Policy (5.02). For more details refer to Policy and Procedure 5.04 Grievance.

6. Discipline

The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure describes the steps to be taken in the event that a person fails to meet the Parish Council's standards of attendance, behaviour and performance or for any breach of any of the terms and conditions of employment. It can also be applied to employee behaviour issues that are brought to the attention of the Council by members of the public. In addition it sets out the Council's expectations and criteria against which a decision on disciplinary action is taken. For details refer to Policy and Procedure 5.05 Discipline.

7. Capability

This procedure differs from the disciplinary process. It covers situations where an employee is failing significantly in their duties or responsibilities either due to a lack of ability, inadequate training or lack of experience.

The purpose of this procedure is to identify such failings and put steps in place to improve performance in a fair and consistent way. For details refer to Policy and Procedure 5.06 Capability.

8. Lone Working

The Council recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. For details refer to Policy 5.07 Lone Working.

9. Whistle Blowing

Melbourn Parish Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the Council to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner.

It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. **Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal**, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management (although in relatively minor instances the line manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

For details refer to Policy and Procedure 5.08 Whistle Blowing.

10. Harassment and Bullying

The principles for the management and control of **Harassment and Bullying** are consistent with the sister Policy **Equality and Diversity** (5.2). These two documents, taken together, form a complete position statement.

There is no simple definition of harassment and bullying. It takes many forms, occurs on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or groups of individuals. As an employer, Melbourn Parish Council defines harassment as a form of employee misconduct that constitutes all unwanted actions or conduct that affects the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct and action contrary to equal treatment for staff as regards access to work and employment, training, and working conditions. This applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Please refer to Section 2 of the Equality and Diversity Policy (5.2) for a list of the characteristics in which harassment can take place. For general details refer to Policy and Procedure 5.03 Harassment and Bullying.

11. Training and Development

It is the Council's policy that all employees and Councillors of the Council will be trained to a high standard to ensure that they are able to deliver the Council's strategic plan as efficiently as possible and be committed to on-going training and development for both staff and members.

Each member of staff is interviewed by way of a staff appraisal once a year and during this appraisal training and development needs are discussed. A development plan is then created and outlines what training and development staff will undertake during the period covered by the plan. The development plan is linked to the council's strategic plans, with the aim of ensuring the staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the objectives set out in those plans. For details refer to Policy 5.09 Training and Development.

12. Health and Safety

Melbourn Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees, contractors, voluntary helpers and others who may be affected by the activities of the Council.

The Council will meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and will provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, the resources necessary to fulfil this commitment.

The Council will seek, as and when appropriate, expert technical advice on Health and Safety to assist the Clerk in fulfilling the Council's responsibilities for ensuring safe working conditions. For details refer to Policy 5.10 Health and Safety.

13. Personal Information

The Council aims to comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Act Legislation 2018. We have adopted a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. The Privacy Notice sets out clearly the reasons for asking for and retaining your personal information. It also explains when and why such information would be deleted from our records. This includes the processing of personal information about you where this is necessary for reasonable business purposes, including (without limitation) sharing appropriate information on a confidential basis with third party benefits providers and payroll operators. This may involve processing sensitive personal data about you including details relating to your health, ethnicity and criminal record. It also contains information on how you can ask for your data to be removed from our records and the implications of this.

14. Confidentiality

You must not disclose details of our business or those of our customers to any other person, other than is necessary and proper in the course of your employment. This applies both during employment and after termination.

15. Outside work

While employed here you must not carry out work for any other employer, or on your own behalf, without the specific permission of your manager.

16. Information Technology (IT) - Ways of Working

(a) IT Security

We recognise that our computer facilities are a key asset in the working environment. Authorised users will be expected to conduct computer activity in accordance with the points listed below, and also the Computer Mis-Use Act 1990. Any breach may be considered as gross misconduct and may be treated as a criminal offence.

Any computer resource may only be used by those people authorised to do so, for authorised activities. You must not leave your computer unsecured at any time while you are logged on, that is leaving it in a position whereby unauthorised access can take place.

All equipment should be treated with due respect to its value. Malfunctions should be reported to your manager.

Data or system information held on our systems automatically becomes the property of the Council, except where explicitly licensed from another organisation. This information is confidential and must not be passed directly or indirectly to non-authorised personnel, whether or not they are employees of the Council.

The use of software products is governed by license. We are legally bound to adhere to the rules governing the use (including number of users), installation and copying of the software. Installing or copying products without the prior agreement of the software supplier is regarded as theft, and the software companies are active in protecting the copyright of their products. Therefore, if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a member of staff has copied software without proper authorisation, disciplinary action will be taken which may result in dismissal.

The security of our IT systems is of paramount importance to us and we must ensure the accidental or malicious introduction of viruses to the system does not occur. Therefore, no member of staff should load software, including any games, without it being checked for viruses.

Under no circumstances should staff load unauthorised data or software i.e. media from computer literature, the Internet, or their home computer, without prior permission from your manager and only then after virus checks.

Terminals and computer cases are not to be opened by unauthorised staff, nor should they remove or transfer components to other equipment. Any staff found to have tampered with computer equipment would be liable to disciplinary action.

The moving or re-allocating of equipment should only be done by agreement with your manager.

Individual computers are to be backed up according to instructions and at the appropriate times.

Appropriate physical care and security measures should be taken of laptops mobile phones or other portable electronic equipment, both on and off our premises.

(b) Email policy

The use of Council email should be reserved for authorised Council purposes only. Any unauthorised electronic mail messages issued by an employee may result in legal action against both the Council and the employee. This is also a disciplinary offence to be treated as misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Employees are authorised to use their personal email for limited personal messages provided that these are not confidential or inappropriate. Email is treated as business communications and messages may be monitored and read by others in the Council. Personal email usage should be limited to authorised breaks.

Attachments to incoming personal emails should be discouraged and never opened on a Council computer as they may contain viruses.

Business Emails should never be in abrupt or inappropriate language and the content should be carefully thought through. Essentially, the language should be as for a conventional letter.

Users should try to avoid capitalised text in the body of Business emails as it is often taken for 'shouting' and proper forms of address and sign off should be used.

(c) Internet usage policy

Employees may use the Internet at any time for work related purposes and during authorised breaks only for personal browsing. Usage of the Internet may be monitored by the Council to ensure that this policy is being followed.

Programmes should never be downloaded, as this may make the Council liable for breach of copyright.

The deliberate accessing of offensive, obscene or indecent material from the Internet is expressly forbidden. This includes not only pornography, but also racist or sexist material, violence or incitement to criminal behaviour. Any such access will be treated as gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

17. Social Media policy

(a) Using personal social media

We allow employees to access their personal accounts at work. But, we expect them to act responsibly and ensure their productivity isn't affected.

Using social media excessively while at work can reduce efficiency and concentration. Whether employees are using their accounts for business or personal purposes, they may easily become sidetracked by the vast amount of available content. We advise our employees to:

- **Use their common sense.** If employees neglect their job duties to spend time on social media, their decline in productivity will show on their performance reviews.
- **Ensure others know that personal account or statements don't represent the Parish Council.** Employees shouldn't state or imply that their personal opinions and content are authorized or endorsed by the Council. We advise, if necessary, using a disclaimer such as "opinions are my own" to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Avoid sharing intellectual property** on a personal account without approval. Confidentiality policies and laws always apply.
- **Avoid any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content.** It may be considered as a violation of the Council's anti-harassment policy, if directed towards colleagues, clients or partners.

18. Representing the Parish Council

All employees represent the Council by handling corporate social media accounts or speak on our company's behalf. We expect them to act carefully and responsibly to protect our company's image and reputation. Employees should:

Be respectful, polite and patient, when engaging in conversations on our company's behalf. They should be extra careful when making declarations or promises towards customers and stakeholders

Avoid speaking on matters outside their field of expertise when possible. Everyone should be careful not to answer questions or make statements that fall under somebody else's responsibility

Never post discriminatory, offensive or libelous content and commentary

Correct or remove any misleading or false content as quickly as possible

19. Use of private cars on Council business

Private cars may only be used on Council business with the permission of your manager. In addition, the driver must have been authorised to drive the car on business under his or her personal insurance policy and will be expected to show a current and valid driving license. Details can be found in your Contract of Employment

20. Business expenses

If you incur out-of-pocket expenses in the course of your duties, you will be reimbursed at the rates and under the conditions in force at the time. To claim

reimbursement you should detail the expenses on a petty cash voucher or expenses claim form, supported by appropriate receipts.

21. Timekeeping

We regard punctuality as essential and you are expected to arrive at work on time. Deliberate falsification of any record of hours worked may lead to summary dismissal.

22. Change of personal details

Please tell your line manager of any changes to your personal details, such as name, marital status, next of kin, telephone number, address or bank details if you are paid by transfer, so that the records can be updated.

23. Personal property

We endeavour to safeguard personal belongings left in its premises, but cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to them. If you lose property on the premises you should report the loss immediately to your manager. Similarly, if you find personal property it should be handed to your manager. A locker is provided for safe keeping of your belongings.

24. Personal telephone calls

Unrestricted use of the telephone for private calls can seriously interfere with business calls and waste time. Therefore, personal calls can only be allowed in emergencies, and incoming personal calls from your relatives and friends outside the Council are to be discouraged for the same reason.

25. Mobile phones

The general use of private mobile phones is not permitted unless for specific Council business purposes, personal emergencies or with permission from a line manager.

26. Dress code

All staff represent the Council and may come into contact with customers and the general public. We take a fairly liberal attitude towards contemporary clothing and jewellery, but expect all members of staff to dress in a manner appropriate for the work being carried out.

27. Drugs and alcohol

Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden in the workplace.

Employees found to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs (other than those prescribed by a medical practitioner) or any other form of substance abuse will be subject to the disciplinary procedure for employment related misconduct.

Document Approval:

(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)

Date of Parish Council meeting:

Review Policy: Every 12 months