



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153

To: - Members of the Finance and General-Purpose Committee

You are summoned to the Finance and General-Purpose Parish Council meeting of Appleton Parish Council to be held at Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road Appleton WA4 5EQ on **Thursday 5th March 2026 at 9:45 AM** for the purposes of transacting the business set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Newton

If you have any general enquiries regarding the above meeting, please contact Karen Newton, Clerk on telephone 01925 268153 or email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk.

If any member of the public wishes to attend the meeting, please contact the clerk before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

To welcome members to the meeting and to receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons, if given.

2. **Members Code of Conduct**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any item of business on the agenda and should do so no later than when that item is reached.

Declarations are a personal matter, and each Member must decide whether to declare an interest based on the circumstances.

Any requests for dispensations relating to pecuniary interests, whether made before or during the meeting, will be considered by the Parish Council, and any granted dispensations will be formally documented.

3. **Public Participation**

Members of the public may make representations, ask questions, or give evidence on agenda items during the public participation period. This period will last no more than three minutes unless directed otherwise by the Chairman. Questions do not require a response at the meeting and must not initiate debate, although the Chairman may request a written or oral reply. All remarks must be addressed to the Chairman, and only one person may speak at a time, in the order directed by the Chairman.

4. **Minutes**

To **resolve** that the minutes of the following meetings be approved as a correct record: **Thursday 5th February 2026**

5. **Budget Report and Summary**

Period: 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025 (Month 9)

To receive and consider the Budget Report and financial summary for the period 1-9 April 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Detailed income and expenditure statements, earmarked reserves, and receipts reports are attached separately for Members' review.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the financial position to 31 December 2025 and consider any actions required.

6. **Policy Review**

To review the following draft policies and governance documents:

Code of Conduct

Dignity at Work Policy

Social Media Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Data Protection Policy

Proposed Terms of Reference – Environment Committee

Members are asked to consider the documents, propose any amendments (with changes clearly identified for audit purposes), and recommend approval to Full Council.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

To **confirm** the date of the next Finance Committee meeting Tuesday 2nd April 2026 at 9:15 AM

K Newton

Clerk of the Appleton Parish Council

Date of issue 28th February 2026

Finance Report

Period: April 2025 – 31 December 2025

Financial Year: 2025/26

1. Overview

On 31 December 2025 (month 9 of 12), the Council remains in a stable financial position.

- **Total Receipts (to date):** £225,495.27
- **Total Payments (including earmarked reserves):** £195,588.56
- **Net position (receipts less payments):** £29,906.71 surplus to date

Most of the annual income has now been received, and expenditure is broadly in line with the approved budget, with some identified overspends and underspends detailed below.

2. Income Position

Total Budgeted Income: £223,700

Total Actual Income to Date: £225,495.27

Income is currently **£1,795.27 above budget**, mainly due to higher than anticipated interest and hall income.

Breakdown:

Precept

- Budget: £186,300
- Received: £186,300
- 100% received

Bank Interest

- Budget: £7,400
- Actual: £8,286.21
- £886.21 above budget
- Reflects continued higher interest rates.

Parish Hall Income

- Budget: £24,000
- Actual: £27,109.75
- £3,109.75 above budget
- Strong hall usage and bookings.

VAT Reclaimed (to date):

- £3,797.87 received

Overall, income performance is strong and ahead of expectations.

3. Expenditure Position (Excluding Earmarked Reserves)

Total Budget: £223,700

Budget to Date (Month 9): £167,775

Actual Net Payments to Date: £189,603.28

Variance to Profiled Budget: £34,096.72 remaining against full-year budget

Total net expenditure represents approximately **85% of the annual budget**, reflecting that several large costs occur earlier in the year (e.g., insurance, subscriptions, staffing).

4. Key Budget Variances

Areas Over Budget

Annual Subscriptions

- Budget: £600
- Actual: £2,040
- Overspend: £1,440
- Likely annual memberships paid in full early in year.

Environmental Working Group

- Budget: £6,000
- Actual: £7,633.71
- Overspend: £1,633.71

Insurance

- Budget: £2,500
- Actual: £2,500.12
- Minor overspend (£0.12)

Staff costs appear high at £120,170.65 but remain within the full-year budget (£133,000), with £12,829.35 remaining.

Areas Underspent

Significant underspends remain in:

- Utilities – £6,593.80 remaining
- Grants – £5,936.98 remaining
- Safety Inspections – £500 remaining
- Website – £500 remaining
- General Contingencies – £1,000 remaining
- Equipment – £1,249.21 remaining
- Ranger Costs – £1,150.15 remaining
- Parish Hall Maintenance – £1,745.64 remaining
- PCSO contribution – £1,300 remaining

- Events Committee – £831.89 remaining

These budgets provide flexibility for the final quarter.

5. VAT

- VAT paid to date: £4,720.24
- VAT reclaimed to date: £3,797.87

Further VAT reclaims will be processed before year end.

6. Earmarked Reserves

Total Reserves Brought Forward: £250,784.31

2025/26 Earmarked Reserve Budget: £267,804.08

Utilised to Date: £1,265.04

Only limited reserve funds have been utilised so far:

- Community Scheme / PDO: £275.92
- Legal advice (employment / subject access): £989.12

All other earmarked reserves remain intact at this stage.

Notably:

- Contingencies (ER): £60,000 (must remain at or above 25% of precept = £46,575)
- Public Health (ER): £32,500
- Public Amenity (ER): £32,500
- Parish Hall (ER): £35,000

Reserves remain healthy and provide strong financial security.

7. Overall Financial Position

On 31 December 2025:

- Income performance is strong and slightly above budget.
- Core expenditure is generally controlled.
- Some service areas show overspends (subscriptions and environmental projects), but these are offset by underspends elsewhere.
- Earmarked reserves remain largely untouched.
- The Council maintains a healthy cash position going into the final quarter.

8. Year-End Outlook (Forecast)

Based on current trends:

- The Council is expected to remain within overall budget.
- Income is likely to exceed original projections due to interest and hall income.

- Some budgets (Environmental Working Group, Subscriptions) may require virement or formal noting of overspend.
- Reserves remain strong and compliant with the 25% precept requirement.

9. Recommendation

Council is asked to:

1. Note the financial position to 31 December 2025.
2. Approve the identified budget variances.
3. Continue monitoring Environmental Working Group expenditure.
4. Note that reserves remain adequate and compliant with policy.

Finance Summary

April 2025 – 31 December 2025 (Month 9)

1. Overall Position

The Council remains in a **strong and stable financial position** at the end of December.

- **Total Income received:** £225,495
- **Total Expenditure:** £195,589
- **Current surplus:** ~£29,907

Most income for the year has now been received, and spending is broadly under control.

2. Income – Better Than Expected

Income is **slightly above budget** overall.

- Precept fully received (£186,300).
- Bank interest higher than expected (+£886).
- Parish Hall income performing very well (+£3,110 over budget).

This additional income strengthens our year-end position.

3. Expenditure – Mostly On Track

Most budgets are within expected limits for Month 9.

Main Overspends to Note:

- **Annual Subscriptions:** £1,440 over (annual payments made early in year).
- **Environmental Working Group:** £1,634 over budget.

These are currently manageable within the overall budget.

Areas with Healthy Underspends:

- Utilities
- Grants
- Equipment
- Ranger costs
- General contingencies
- Parish Hall maintenance
- PCSO contribution

These provide flexibility for the final quarter.

Staff costs remain within the annual budget, with approximately £12,800 remaining.

4. Reserves – Very Strong

- **Total earmarked reserves:** £250,784 brought forward.

- Only £1,265 used so far this year.
- General contingency reserve remains well above the required 25% of the precept (£46,575 minimum requirement).

Reserves are healthy and provide good financial security.

5. Outlook for Year End

- The Council is expected to remain within overall budget.
 - Income is likely to finish slightly above projections.
 - No immediate financial concerns.
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Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the financial position to 31 December 2025.
 - Note the identified overspends within Environmental Working Group and Subscriptions.
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Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 5th February 2026 at 9.45 AM

Present: -

Committee Members Cllr L Chapman (Chair), Cllr G Chapman, Cllr Ken Critchley, Cllr Helen Speed.

Cllrs: Cllr R Bett, Cllr P Lewenz

Clerk: Karen Newton

Public: None Present

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr L. Chapman, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received and noted as follows:

Cllr J Wheeler – Work Commitments

Cllr P Walker – Health

Resolved: The apologies for absence were **accepted**.

2. Members Code of Conduct

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4. Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

5. Finance & Governance

Resolved: 5.1–5.8

- The Payment Schedules for November 2025, December 2025, and January 2026 were **approved and authorised**.
 - The bank reconciliations for November 2025 and December 2025 were **approved**.
 - The publication of items over £100 for November and December 2025 to be put on the Parish Council website was **noted**. It was agreed that from now and in the future the Council will publish monthly on its website; all payments including payments less than £100 but excluding all staff costs.
 - **Note:** Staffing costs for November 2025 to February 2026 will be reviewed at the **March 26 full council meeting**.
 - *The clerk advised that the breakdown of staffing costs should be reviewed at the F&GP Committee meeting for confidentiality purposes.*
- Proposed:** Cllr Ken Critchley and **Seconded:** Cllr H. Speed

6. Current Financial Position

The Committee **reviewed**:

- Income and expenditure to date against the approved budget.
- A summary of reserves and earmarked funds.
- Any significant variances or unexpected costs.

Resolved: The current financial position was **noted**.

7. Reserves and Financial Risk Management

The Committee **reviewed**:

- General and earmarked reserves.
- Financial risks and contingencies.

Actions:

- To refer relevant environmental matters to the **Environment Working Party**.
- To review **Dudlow Green Medical Centre** and the **New community centre** to help establish a clearer position on the reserves.
- To consider use of reserves for a potential expansion of the **Parish Hall**.
- To develop a **parish strategy restructure** to review all reserves comprehensively

Resolved: The review and proposed actions were **noted**.

8. Data Protection Policy

The Committee **reviewed** the amended Data Protection Policy, including a compliance update.

Discussion: Following a short discussion, it was agreed that the policy **requires further review** before adoption.

Resolved: Review of the policy was **deferred** to the next Full Council Meeting Tuesday 17th February 2026.

9. Date of Next Meeting

To **confirm** the date of the next Finance Committee meeting Thursday 5th March 2026 at 9:45 AM

Chair of the Appleton Parish Council:

Date:

Appleton Parish Council

Data Protection Policy as produced by Councillors Eleanor and Richard 12/11/2025.

Introduction

This Data Protection Policy has been prepared to ensure that all councillors, Employees and Volunteers, who have access to and/or handle personal data associated with Appleton Parish Council, are aware of the current data protection regulations requirements. Furthermore, this policy also aims to make sure that the data subjects themselves are aware of their rights.

This policy applies to all councillors, employees and volunteers who will hereafter be referred to as "Data Handlers" within this policy.

This policy is based upon the requirements of:-

Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

General Data Protection Regulation UK (GDPR) 2021

Data Use and Access Act (DUAA) 2025

Personal Data

This is information about individuals that enables them to be identified. This could include their name, address, place of work, contact information, other types of personal information, etcetera. This information could be located and stored in physical or IT based record systems.

Data Controller

The Data Controller is the person or persons who, on behalf of the Parish Council, decide what personal information the Parish Council will hold and for how long it will be used or retained.

The person or persons carrying out the role of Data Controller will need to be appointed by the Parish Council.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The Information Commissioner's Office is the UK's independent regulatory office for data protection and freedom of information.

Data Protection Officer (DPO)

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) is the person or persons who ensure that laws protecting personal data are being implemented within an organisation.

Parish Councils are not required to appoint a Data Protection Officer because they are not considered to be public authorities for the purposes of GDPR under the data Protection Act 2018.

The seven principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)

1. Lawfulness, fairness and transparency

Personal data must be collected and processed lawfully, fairly and transparently and individuals must be told about its collection and use.

2. Purpose limitation

Personal data must be collected only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed or used in a way that is incompatible with those purposes.

3. Data minimisation

Personal data must be adequate, relevant and limited only to what is necessary for the processing purpose.

4. Accuracy

Personal data must be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Inaccurate or incomplete data must be corrected or deleted.

5. Storage limitation

Personal data must not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed.

6. Integrity and confidentiality

Personal data must be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.

7. Accountability

The controller or processor is responsible for complying with these principles and must be able to demonstrate compliance.

Data Handlers Responsibilities

All Data Handlers are responsible for the safeguarding of any personal data that they come into contact with whilst carrying out their duties on behalf of Appleton Parish Council.

All Data Handlers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information supplied by the public, unless the subject has given permission otherwise.

Storage of data

Appleton Parish Council recognises its responsibilities when it takes personal details about people. This information will be kept within the Parish Council's facilities and is not available for public access. This personal data shall be stored by the Parish Council within secure, password protected, office computer(s).

When data is no longer required, has become inaccurate or has served its purpose, it will be shredded or securely deleted.

Subject Access Requests (SARs)

Appleton Parish Council is aware that people have the right to access any personal information that is held about them. These Subject Access Requests (SARs) must be submitted writing using hard copy or email.

Data Breaches

GDPR defines a personal data breach as "a breach of security leading to accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of or access to, personal data".

Data breaches could include: -

Access by an unauthorised third party

Deliberate or accidental action by a data handler

Sending personal data to an incorrect recipient

Computer devices containing personal data being lost or stolen

Alteration of personal data without permission

Loss of availability of personal data

Reporting a Data Breach

If and when a Data Handler becomes aware of a data breach that may result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of the individual, the breach must be reported to the individual and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) without delay and in any event within 72 hours of having become aware of the breach.

The ICO can be contacted at: -

<https://ico.org.uk/fororganisations/report-a-breach>

The Data handler shall inform the Parish Council of the breach without delay.

Appleton Parish Council

Environment Committee terms of Reference as produced by Councillors Eleanor and Richard, 23/11/2025

1. The Environment Committee shall consist of a minimum of three Parish Councillors. Minutes of the meetings shall be taken by the Parish Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
2. The Environment Committee shall be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
3. The Chair of the Environment Committee shall be appointed annually by the Parish Council from the appointed members the Environment Committee.
4. The quorum of the Environment Committee shall be three Parish Councillors.
5. The Parish Council shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of the Environment Committee and the number of these meetings shall be not less than four each year. In the event that the Chair of the Environment Committee considers that additional meetings are required, the Chair of the Committee can, subject to the prior approval each time of the Chair of the Parish Council, call a meeting as described below.
6. At each meeting of the Environment Committee, the Committee can, where required, approve expenditure of up to £500.00. All expenditure authorised by the Environment Committee will be advised to the full Parish Council at next meeting of the Parish Council.
7. Apart from the £500.00 expenditure item referred to above, the Environment Committee cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.
8. Only those Parish Councillors appointed to the Environment Committee may vote at a meeting. In the case of an equal vote, the Chair of the Committee shall have a second or casting vote.
9. All correspondence relating to Environment Committee matters generated by Committee Members, Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk or Assistant Clerk shall be carried out using the official, secure, email system in use by the Parish Council at the time.

10. The Parish Clerk or Assistant Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee shall call a meeting of the Environment Committee and also send out the meeting agenda. The agenda shall be sent to all Parish Councillors.
11. The public and the press may attend and participate in any of the meetings of the Environment Committee.
12. The Parish Clerk or Assistant Clerk shall take Minutes of all meetings and the Minutes must be agreed by the Environment Committee. In exceptional circumstances where the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk are not available to take the minutes, or for another reason as decided by the Committee Chair, the minutes can be taken by a Committee Councillor appointed by the Chair and these minutes must also be agreed by the Environment Committee. All Environment Committee minutes will be presented to the Parish Council at the next Council meeting and the minutes will be retained by the Parish Clerk. These Minutes are a public document and will be published.
13. The main matters under the remit of the Environment Committee are as follows; -
 - (a) To identify, consider and monitor environmental matters in Appleton Parish, in liaison with local communities where appropriate and to make recommendations to the Parish Council.
 - (b) To liaise with and provide support to the Events Working Party.
14. The Parish Clerk shall be responsible for bringing any changes in legislation and good working practices to the attention of the Environment Committee for their consideration to ensure that the Parish Council procedures remain up to date and relevant.
15. The Environment Committee will generally only make recommendations to the Parish Council at the next Parish Council meeting. In exceptional circumstances the Chair of the Committee may ask The Chair of the Parish Council to call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Parish Council.



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Councillor Code of Conduct As reviewed by Councillors Eleanor and Richard 09/02/2026

Statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to provide better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly and transparently. We have both an individual and a collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

This Code of Conduct should be read alongside the Council's "Dignity at Work Policy".

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "councillor" means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A "co-opted member" is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority.

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee".

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, "local authority" includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and

rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of Councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the **Nolan Principles**.

The Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles)

The principles are as follows:

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest, not for personal, family or financial gain.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office must be accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner as possible. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful in all dealings.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- You misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all of the facts that you are acting as a councillor

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication

- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Parish Councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Parish Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1 Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust, but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
 - i. I have received the prior consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - iv. the disclosure is:
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a Councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

4.4 Disagreement with a decision made by the Council does not, in itself, justify disclosure of confidential information

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority

must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

This does not prevent robust political debate, criticism of Council decisions, or lawful free expression, but behaviour that is dishonest, abusive, or seriously undermines public confidence may constitute disrepute.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a Councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access to use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

9. Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and declare my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should declare an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be declared by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public

confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary (i.e. financial) interest is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix A sets out the detailed provisions on registering and declaring interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered, but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it, but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendix A

Registering

interests

Within 28 days of this Code of Conduct being adopted by the local authority or your election or appointment to office (where that is later) you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"**Partner**" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor/member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a "sensitive interest", you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you

have a pecuniary interest.

5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it].

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting, but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a "sensitive interest", you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a "sensitive interest" you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** -

- a. your own financial interest or wellbeing;
- b. a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied: -

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or wellbeing:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to

Speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a "sensitive interest", you do not have to disclose the nature of this interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it].

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the
	councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer

Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest: -

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) Any body

- (1) exercising functions of a public nature
- (2) directed to charitable purposes or
- (3) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ
Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Appleton Parish Council Dignity at Work, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy Eleanor and Richard 11/02/2026

(Draft 2026 Revision)

1. Policy Statement

Appleton Parish Council is committed to providing a working environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

The Council will not tolerate bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation by or against employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers, visitors, or members of the public.

The Council will not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Where concerns arise relating to competing rights or differing needs, the Council will seek to act lawfully, reasonably, proportionately and promptly.

The Council recognises its statutory duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

This policy should be read alongside the Council's Grievance Procedure, their Disciplinary Procedure, and their Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of the Council
- All elected and co-opted councillors
- All contractors, agency workers and consultants
- All volunteers acting on behalf of the Council

It applies to all work-related situations, including:

- Council and committee meetings
- Working groups and site visits
- Training and official events
- Work-related social events organised or funded by the Council
- Email, telephone and written correspondence
- Online and social media activity connected to Council business

It also applies to behaviour by members of the public where it impacts the dignity and safety of those working for or representing the Council.



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153

Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

3. Standards of Behaviour

All individuals covered by this policy are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Act professionally and courteously
- Avoid misuse of position or authority
- Raise concerns responsibly and constructively

Robust debate and challenge are both legitimate and desirable within a democratic environment. However, behaviour must not cross the line into intimidation, hostility, or personal attack.

4. Definitions

4.1 Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or injures the recipient.

Bullying may be verbal, non-verbal, written, physical, psychological or online.

Unwanted physical contact, including touching, blocking, or deliberately invading personal space, may constitute bullying or harassment and will not be tolerated.

4.2 Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 which has the purpose or effect of:

- Violating a person's dignity; or
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

A single serious incident may constitute harassment.



Appleton Parish Council

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Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

4.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.

4.4 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have raised or supported a complaint under this policy.

Victimisation will not be tolerated.

4.5 Third-Party Behaviour

The Council recognises that inappropriate behaviour may sometimes arise from members of the public or visitors. The Council will take reasonable and proportionate steps to address such behaviour where it affects those working for or representing the Council.

5. Raising Concerns

Concerns about behaviour under this policy should be raised promptly.

Employees should use the Council's Grievance Procedure.

Allegations concerning employee conduct will be handled under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure where appropriate.

Allegations concerning councillors may be addressed under the Code of Conduct and, where necessary, referred to the Monitoring Officer.

Where appropriate, informal resolution may be considered.

6. Protection from Detriment

No individual will suffer detriment for raising a concern in good faith under this policy.

Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to legislative or organisational



change.

Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153

Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk



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Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Social Media Policy

As produced by Councillors Eleanor and Richard 16/02/2026

Policy Statement

Social Media is now an established form of communication, enabling better and more direct contact between the Parish Council and the people and organisations that it serves and works alongside.

This Social Media Policy describes how Appleton Parish Council will use social media to improve and develop the way in which it communicates with its residents, local businesses and government agencies, both central and local.

It also sets out what is and is not acceptable usage of social media when used in any context that could be considered as being connected in any way to the Parish Council.

This policy should also be read together with the Code of Conduct for councillors.

It is intended that Appleton Parish Council will use its Facebook page to provide up to date information regarding the activities of the Parish Hall users, Council meetings, and those meetings that are open to the public, events arranged by the Parish Council, and provide a place for receiving comments and suggestions from residents and local organisations.

Sending a message or making a post to the Council using social media other than the official Parish Council email address, will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and the Council is not obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through social media platforms.

SCOPE

The term "Social Media" in this policy describes the range of websites and online tools which allow people to interact online. Social media platforms include, **but are not limited to:**

The Appleton Parish Council website	Facebook
WhatsApp	Snapchat
Bloggs and discussion forums	X
Linkedin	You Tube
Instagram	Tik Tok
Telegram	Reddit
Email	Messenger

Used in the correct way, social media is about sharing information, giving opinions, creating interest groups and building on-line communities and networks, which encourage participation and engagement.

This policy relates to any social media communication published by, or on behalf of, the Parish Council, or any individual in their capacity as a councillor, a Council employee or a volunteer working for the Council.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The key principles of using social media are that information and comments are immediate to a large number of people and organisations and are usually conversational in tone.

However, there are standards that should be followed:

- Any communication can be misinterpreted, and the very essence of lack of face-to-face communication can magnify any issues.
- Comments must therefore be accurate, informative and considered as it will be recorded and permanent
- Councillors, Council employees and volunteers working for the Council should be mindful of any posts they make on a personal basis, which may bring the Council into disrepute.

Responsibility and Accountability

The Parish Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk have delegated responsibility for all formal communications between the Parish Council and members of the public. They will be responsible for maintaining the Council website, Facebook page and any other Council social media that may be set up by the Council.

However, it is understood that there will be occasions when individual councillors, Council employees and volunteers working for the Council may be using social media.

Individual councillors may communicate on social media e.g. as a moderator or administrator to ensure posts and responses are acceptable i.e. meets the criteria described in the Criteria section below. Anyone with concerns regarding content posted on social media sites that denigrate parish councillors, Council employees, members of the public or volunteers working for the Council, should report their concerns to the Parish Clerk or Deputy Clerk. If this is not appropriate, they should report their concerns to the Chair of the Council.

CRITERIA

Social media communication from the Parish Council should meet the following criteria:

- It should be civil in tone, tasteful and relevant
- It should not contain content that is deemed illegal, construed as libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful to a person's reputation, obscene, profane, sexually or racially offensive.
- It should not contain any content that is copied or shared, for which the Parish Council does not own the copyright. **Exceptions** include the sharing of local news items from local and national agencies, items from other government agencies and updates from local and national Police.
- It should not contain any personal information, other than the required basic contact details.
- It should not contain any information that may infringe the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Councillors, Council employees and volunteers working for the Council do not need to have personal social media account(s), but if they do, they should:

- Indicate clearly whether or not they are communicating in their capacity as a councillor or employee or volunteer or as a private individual.

- Councillors should ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct for Councillors, whenever they act, or appear to act, in an official capacity on social media in the same way as for other forms of communication.

Independent communications with residents are important in order to be approachable and to engage with them.

The overarching rules are that councillors, employees and volunteers should not:

- Make commitments on behalf of the Council without approval
- Bring the Council into disrepute.
- Fail to respect confidentiality.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Respect

Do not use social media to make personal attacks or indulge in rude, disrespectful or offensive comments. Treat others with respect.

Equality

Do not publish anything that might be interpreted as racist, sexist, homophobic or anti-faith. Comply with all equality legislation.

Bullying and Harassing

Do not post anything that may be construed as bullying, harassing or intimidatory.

Confidentiality

Do not disclose any information that is given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought to be reasonably aware, is of a confidential nature.

Separation

Consider keeping your personal and councillor profiles separate on social media sites.

Check your privacy settings.

Be aware that you may be seen as acting in your official capacity if you publish any information that you could only have accessed by being a councillor.

Potential Issues

It must be understood that failing to comply with any legislation may lead to legal challenges personally or against the Council

The following is a list of potential legal issues:

Libel

If you publish an untrue statement about a person or organisation which is construed as damaging to their reputation, they may consider it as defamation and take legal action.

Copyright

Do not use images or text from a copyrighted source e.g. photographs or extracts from publications, without obtaining permission as it will likely be breaking copyright laws.

Data Protection

Data Protection legislation is quite clear and should be adhered to. Unless there is prior express permission, no personal data of individuals should be published on social media or any other form of communication. You cannot presume consent to pass data on to others.

Bias and Predetermination

Councillors must not publish on social media or any other form of communication that suggests they have made up their minds about an issue that has not been formally decided by Council. Councillors should be prepared to attend meetings with an open mind, weigh all the information and evidence and make an informed decision. You could be challenged if you have already published your views and/or decision beforehand.

Any changes, updates and new legislation should be added to this document immediately and notified to all councillors and posted to all relevant social media sites.



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, Warrington,
Cheshire WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153

Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Appleton Parish Council Safeguarding Policy

February 2026

Eleanor and Richard 11/02/2026

1. Policy Statement

Appleton Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

The Parish Council recognises that:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Children and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- The Council has a duty of care when organising events and providing facilities used by the community.

While the Parish Council is not a care provider, it provides community facilities and organises public events. This policy sets out how safeguarding responsibilities will be managed in those contexts.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Members of committees (including the Events Committee)
- Contractors engaged by the Council
- Activities organised by the Parish Council
- Use of Parish Council premises

3. Definitions

Children and Young People

Anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk (Care Act 2014 Definition)

An adult aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs; and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves.

4. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All councillors, employees and volunteers must:

- Remain alert to safeguarding concerns.
- Act appropriately if concerns arise.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

The Parish Council does not investigate allegations of abuse. Concerns will be referred to the appropriate statutory authority.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Parish Clerk. In their absence, the Deputy Clerk will act as Deputy DSL.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns.
- Maintaining secure records.
- Making referrals to relevant authorities.
- Providing advice to councillors and staff.
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed annually.

6. Parish Council Organised Events

Where the Parish Council organises community events:

- Safeguarding considerations must form part of event planning.
- Event risk assessments must include safeguarding risks.
- A nominated safeguarding contact must be identified for each event.
- Councillors, staff and volunteers must not place themselves in situations where they are alone with a child or adult at risk.
- Any safeguarding concern arising during an event must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Lost Child Procedure

Where a child is reported missing during a Council event:

- The DSL or event lead must be informed immediately.
- The child should remain supervised in a safe public location.
- Police should be contacted where appropriate.

7. Parish Hall Hire

Organisations or individuals hiring the Parish Hall and working with children, young people or adults at risk are responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements.

Hirers must:

- Ensure appropriate DBS checks are in place where required by law.
- Maintain their own safeguarding policy.
- Ensure appropriate supervision ratios.
- Conduct appropriate risk assessments.
- Hold adequate public liability insurance.

The Parish Council reserves the right to:

- Request evidence of safeguarding arrangements.
- Refuse or terminate hire where safeguarding concerns arise.

Regular groups (e.g., toddler groups) are expected to operate under their own safeguarding framework.

8. Warm Safe Space and Community Support Sessions

Where the Parish Council provides space for community support sessions (e.g., warm safe space):

- Staff and volunteers must remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or self-neglect.
- Concerns must be reported to the DSL.
- The Council does not provide personal care or specialist supervision.

9. Recognising Abuse

Abuse may take many forms.

Children

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained injuries.
- Changes in behaviour.
- Signs of neglect.
- Sexualised behaviour inappropriate to age.
- Fearfulness or withdrawal.

Adults at Risk

Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse.
- Domestic abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Psychological or emotional abuse.
- Financial or material abuse.
- Modern slavery.
- Discriminatory abuse.
- Organisational abuse.
- Neglect or acts of omission.
- Self-neglect.

Concerns should always be reported — even if uncertain.

10. Reporting Concerns

If there is immediate danger, call 999.

Otherwise, report concerns to:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (Parish Clerk)

Or contact directly:

Warrington Borough Council

Children's Social Care: 01925 443322

Out of Hours: 01925 444400

Police (non-emergency): 101

All concerns should be reported as soon as possible.

Contact details for local safeguarding services and support agencies are provided in Appendix A.

11. Allegations Against Councillors, Staff or Volunteers

Any allegation against a councillor, employee or volunteer must be:

- Reported immediately to the DSL.
- Referred to the relevant statutory authority.

The Parish Council will follow its disciplinary procedures where appropriate, including suspension during investigation if necessary.

12. Safer Recruitment

Where roles involve regular contact with children or adults at risk:

- The Council will follow safer recruitment principles.
- DBS checks will be obtained where legally required.
- References will be sought for relevant roles.

13. Conduct and Boundaries

Councillors, employees and volunteers must:

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Avoid private communication with children via social media or messaging platforms.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Not take photographs of children without appropriate consent.

Unwanted physical contact or inappropriate behaviour may constitute misconduct and will not be tolerated.

14. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- All safeguarding concerns will be recorded in writing.
- Records will be stored securely.
- Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Data will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

15. Training and Awareness

The Parish Council will:

- Ensure councillors and staff are aware of safeguarding expectations.
- Provide appropriate safeguarding awareness training where necessary.
- Review this policy annually.

16. Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Hall Hire Terms and Conditions
- Risk Assessment Templates

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or operational requirements change.

Appendix A

Safeguarding Contacts and Support Services

The following contacts are provided for guidance and support. In an emergency where someone is at immediate risk of harm, always call **999**.

Immediate Risk of Harm

Emergency Services

999

If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger.

Police (Non-Emergency)

101

To report concerns where there is no immediate danger but police involvement may be required.

Children's Social Care – Warrington Borough Council

01925 443322

(Out of hours: 01925 444400)

For concerns about a child's welfare, abuse or neglect.

Adult Social Care – Warrington Borough Council

01925 443322

(Out of hours: 01925 444400)

For concerns about abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of an adult at risk.

Warrington Safeguarding Partnership

www.warrington.gov.uk/wsp

Local safeguarding procedures, policies and partnership information.

NSPCC

Helpline:

0808 800 5000 (free, 24 hours)

www.nspcc.org.uk

Advice, guidance and confidential reporting for concerns about children.

Action for Children

www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/worried-about-a-child

Information and support for those concerned about a child's welfare.

Government Guidance

Report Child Abuse (Gov.uk)

www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse

NHS – Spotting Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/spotting-signs-of-child-sexual-abuse/

Parish Council Safeguarding Contact

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Parish Clerk

Appleton Parish Council

01925 268153

✉ clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

In the absence of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk will act as Deputy DSL.



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, Warrington, Cheshire
WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity Policy as produced by Councillors Eleanor and Richard 21/02/2026

Introduction

Appleton Parish Council is committed to creating an inclusive environment where residents, councillors, employees and volunteers are all treated with dignity and respect and are enabled to fulfil their full potential. This Equality and Diversity Policy sets out our commitment to promoting equality, valuing diversity and eliminating discrimination in line with UK legislation and best practices.

Legal Requirements

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the basis of the following "protected characteristics" as defined in the Equality Act 2010: -

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage & civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Furthermore, Appleton Parish Council recognises that, as a Parish Council, it needs to recognise its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard for the need to: -

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people of different backgrounds.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees, councillors, volunteers and service users have equal opportunities and are treated fairly, regardless of their protected characteristics. Appleton Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, as well as harassment and victimisation.

In rare cases, different treatment may be necessary for practical or legal reasons (for example where a role has a specific requirement). In such cases the Council will ensure that any decisions made are fair and lawful.

Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, volunteering, Council business and delivery of services. All employment-related decisions (including recruitment, promotion, training and remuneration) will be based upon individual skills, merit and aptitude.

The Council will ensure that everyone involved in its work is supported and encouraged to reach their full potential, helping them to make full use of available talent and to improve public service. The Council also recognises its role in ensuring that residents and service users are treated fairly and with respect when interacting with the Council and its representatives.

Our Commitment

To promote a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion in all its activities.

To provide a safe and welcoming environment for employees, volunteers, councillors and residents.

To prevent and address all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination.

To ensure that all the Council's relevant policies and procedures are aligned with the values set out in this Equality and Diversity Policy.

To provide training as necessary to support the understanding of equality responsibilities.

Dealing with Complaints and Grievances

Breaches of this Equality and Diversity Policy will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Any employee who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment may raise the matter using the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk, or in their absence, the Deputy Clerk, is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. Councillors are expected to uphold the principles of equality and respect in all of their dealings on behalf of the Council.

Accessibility

This policy can be made available in alternative languages or formats upon request

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council, or more frequently if required by changes in legislation or accepted best practice.