HAUGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Adopted 22nd June 2021

1.   POLICY STATEMENT

1.1   We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

1.2   This policy covers all employees and Councllors.

1.3   This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2.   WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

2.1   Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

3.   HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

3.1   We hope that in many cases employees or Councillors will be able to raise any concerns with the Clerk or Proper Officer, or in the case of the Clerk or Proper Officer, with the Chairman of the Parish Council. However, where the preference is not to raise it with the Clerk or Proper Officer for any reason, the employee or Councillor should contact the Chair of the Parish Council.   Contact details are at the end of this policy.

3.2   We will arrange a meeting with the employee or Councillor as soon as possible to discuss their concern. The employee or Councillor may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the employee's disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1 We hope that the employee or Councillor will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If an employee or Councillor wants to raise their concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep their identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating the concern.

5. EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES

5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases it should not be necessary to alert anyone externally.

5.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for employees to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLE-BLOWERS

6.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistle-blowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

6.2 Whistle-blowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If an employee or Councillor believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Clerk or Proper Officer immediately, or in the case of the Clerk or Proper Officer, with the Chair of the Parish Council. If the matter is not remedied, they should raise it formally using the Council's Grievance Procedure.

6.3 The employee or Councillor must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If an employee is involved in such conduct, they may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistle-blower could have a right to sue the employee personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

6.4 However, if we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistle-blower may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.5 Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

7. CONTACTS

Whistle Blowing Officer for the Parish Council	Mrs. T Shaw thirza.shaw@haughleypc.co.uk
Chairman of the Parish Council	Gerald Brown Gerald.brown@haughleypc.co.uk
Free, confidential whistleblowing advice	020 3117 2520 Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk**Policy Statement**