



St Helen Without Parish Council

Working for You

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction & Purpose

St Helen Without Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all individuals who may be involved in or affected by Council activities, especially **children, young people and vulnerable adults** (as defined by relevant UK safeguarding guidance and legislation). The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure a safe environment for all people accessing Council services, facilities and activities;
- outline responsibilities for safeguarding and responding appropriately to concerns;
- ensure councillors, staff, volunteers, contractors and others understand expected behaviours and reporting procedures.

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council employees (including the Clerk/RFO), volunteers, contractors and partners working on behalf of the Council.

2. Policy Statement

The Council:

- recognises that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount;
- believes everyone has the right to live free from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- acknowledges its duty to safeguard those at risk under UK law and statutory guidance;
- will take appropriate action when there are concerns about the safety of an individual.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Child/Young Person:** a person under 18 years of age.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** an adult who may be in need of community care services due to age, disability, mental or other health difficulties, and who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

4. Responsibilities

Safeguarding Lead

The Council will appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, responsible for:

- receiving and managing safeguarding concerns;
- reporting concerns to the relevant statutory authority (e.g., local authority safeguarding team, police);
- maintaining confidential records of concerns and actions;
- ensuring this policy is reviewed and staff/volunteers are informed of updates.

The name and contact details of the current Safeguarding Lead will be published on the Council's website and noticeboards.

Councillors, Staff & Volunteers

All Council representatives must:

- be familiar with and follow this policy;
- treat everyone with respect and dignity;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- report any concerns about abuse, neglect or poor practice to the DSL immediately.

5. Recruitment & Training

- The Council will use safer recruitment practices for any role that involves direct contact with children and vulnerable adults, in line with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements where appropriate.
- All Councillors, staff and volunteers will be offered safeguarding training to recognise signs of abuse or neglect and understand how to respond.

6. Reporting Concerns

If anyone has concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering or at risk of harm:

1. **Listen calmly and take them seriously**
2. **Do not investigate or ask leading questions**
3. **Reassure them** that they have done the right thing by speaking up
4. **Explain** that the information may need to be shared to keep them safe

5. **Report immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
6. **Record the concern factually and promptly**

In emergencies where someone is at immediate risk, contact **the Police** via 999.

7. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- All safeguarding matters must be treated as **confidential**;
- Information will only be shared on a **need-to-know basis**, and always in line with statutory guidance and the Data Protection Act;
- Records of safeguarding concerns will be securely stored and only accessible to authorised persons;
- The Council recognises that there is a duty to share concerns with the relevant local authority safeguarding teams where necessary to protect an individual at risk.

8. Support for Those Affected

The Council will seek to ensure that individuals affected by safeguarding concerns are supported sensitively, including offering information about local support services where appropriate.

9. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside related Council policies such as:

- Code of Conduct
- Health & Safety Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion principles

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least **every three years**, or sooner if legislative changes or significant incidents occur, to ensure it remains up to date and effective.