

**THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
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## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **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.

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 will be able to raise any concerns with the Proper Officer. However, where the preference is not to raise it with their manager for any reason, the employee 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 as soon as possible to discuss their concern. The employee 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 staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If an employee 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 WHISTLEBLOWERS

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 believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Proper Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied they should raise it formally using the Council's Grievance Procedure.

6.3 The employee 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

<b>Whistleblowing Officer for the Parish Council</b>	<b>Vicky Waples</b> Email: <a href="mailto:vicky@thurstonparishcouncil.uk">vicky@thurstonparishcouncil.uk</a>
<b>Chairman of the Parish Council</b>	<b>Christopher Dashper</b> Email: <a href="mailto:chris@thurstonparishcouncil.uk">chris@thurstonparishcouncil.uk</a>
<b>Free, confidential whistleblowing advice</b>	<b>020 3117 2520</b> Website: <a href="https://protect-advice.org.uk/">https://protect-advice.org.uk/</a>