



Treverbyn Parish Council

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

Treverbyn Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, honesty, integrity, accountability and ethical conduct.

The Council encourages councillors, employees, volunteers and others working with the Council to report genuine concerns regarding wrongdoing, misconduct, malpractice, or unlawful activity.

This policy sets out the arrangements for raising concerns responsibly and confidentially.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage the reporting of genuine concerns
- Provide a safe process for disclosures
- Protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith
- Support transparency and accountability
- Assist in the prevention and detection of wrongdoing
- Ensure concerns are investigated appropriately

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Councillors
- Consultants
- Volunteers
- Agency workers

- Co-opted members
- Suppliers and service providers where appropriate

The policy applies to concerns relating to Council activities, operations, governance, or conduct.

4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about suspected wrongdoing, misconduct, or unlawful activity occurring within or connected to the Council.

Examples may include:

- Fraud or financial irregularity
- Corruption or bribery
- Theft or misuse of Council funds
- Breach of legal obligations
- Breach of Council policies
- Abuse of authority
- Misconduct or unethical behaviour
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental damage
- Data protection breaches
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing
- Cyber security misconduct

5. Matters Not Normally Covered

This policy is not normally intended for:

- Personal employment grievances
- Complaints about service delivery
- Minor interpersonal disputes

Such matters should usually be addressed through appropriate Council procedures.

However, concerns involving wider public interest or serious misconduct may fall within this policy.

6. Principles

The Council shall:

- Treat concerns seriously
- Investigate matters appropriately
- Handle disclosures sensitively
- Protect confidentiality where possible
- Support individuals raising genuine concerns

- Avoid victimisation or retaliation

The Council recognises the importance of speaking up in the public interest.

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

Individuals raising concerns in good faith shall not suffer:

- Victimisation
- Harassment
- Disadvantage
- Retaliation

because they have reported concerns appropriately.

Protection applies even if concerns are ultimately not substantiated, provided they were raised honestly and reasonably.

Deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary or other action.

8. Confidentiality

The Council shall seek to protect the identity of individuals raising concerns where possible and lawful.

However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed where:

- Disclosure is required by law
- Investigation requires disclosure
- Court or regulatory proceedings arise

Information shall be handled sensitively and, on a need to know basis.

9. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be reported to:

- The Clerk, or
- The Chair of the Council where appropriate

If concerns involve both the Clerk and Chair, concerns may be raised directly with:

- Vice-Chairman
- Internal or external auditors
- Relevant regulatory bodies
- The police where criminal activity is suspected

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

Individuals are encouraged to provide:

- Details of the concern
- Relevant dates or events
- Names of persons involved where known
- Supporting evidence where available

10. Anonymous Disclosures

Anonymous concerns may be considered, but investigation may be more difficult where insufficient information is provided.

The Council encourages individuals to provide contact details where possible.

11. Investigation Procedure

The Council shall assess concerns proportionately and appropriately.

The process may include:

- Preliminary assessment
- Internal investigation
- Referral to auditors
- Referral to external agencies
- Referral to police or regulatory authorities

The Council may seek professional advice where necessary.

The extent of information shared with the whistleblower may be limited due to confidentiality or legal considerations.

12. Outcomes

Where concerns are substantiated, the Council may take appropriate action, including:

- Internal disciplinary procedures
- Review of policies or procedures
- Financial recovery action
- Referral to external authorities
- Criminal or civil proceedings

The Council shall seek to learn lessons and strengthen governance where appropriate.

13. Malicious or False Allegations

Concerns raised maliciously, knowingly falsely, or for personal advantage may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Withdrawal of privileges or access
- Referral to external authorities where appropriate

14. Relationship with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside other Council policies, including:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Grievance Procedures
- Data Protection Policy
- Financial Regulations
- IT and Cyber Security Policies

15. Monitoring and Review

The Council shall monitor the effectiveness of this policy and review it periodically.

Lessons learned from investigations may inform future governance improvements.

16. Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to legislative, governance, or operational changes.

17. Adoption

Adopted by Treverbyn Parish Council on: