CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

Managing Abuse and Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

Protecting staff, councillors and volunteers from abuse, threats and violence

Status	Final	**Policy owner**	Parish Clerk
Adopted	November 2026	**Minute reference**	Item 18, 16/11/2026
Last reviewed	November 2026	**Next review**	November 2027
Review cycle	Annual	**Applies to**	Employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public

1. Statement

Capel Parish Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff, councillors and volunteers. Abuse, threats, intimidation and violence are unacceptable. This policy replaces the "Zero Tolerance Policy". It explains how the Council prevents and responds to work-related violence and aggression by members of the public, whether in person, by phone, in writing or online. It does not stop anyone raising a genuine complaint or concern.

Staff concerns about each other are handled under the Grievance, Disciplinary and Dignity at Work procedures in the Staff Handbook. Complaints about councillors go to the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct.

2. What we mean

Work-related violence and aggression is any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work or Council duties: physical assault, threatening behaviour, intimidation, serious or persistent verbal abuse, and abusive communications. Discriminatory or sexual harassment may also be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Unreasonable behaviour also includes persistent, repetitive or very demanding contact that disproportionately uses limited resources.

3. Responsibilities

- **The Council** carries out and reviews risk assessments (lone working, public meetings, online abuse), consults staff, provides information, training and support, and keeps reporting arrangements clear (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999).
- **Everyone** takes reasonable care for their own and others' safety, follows controls and training, reports incidents and supports colleagues.
- **The Clerk** (or the Chair or Vice-Chair if the Clerk is involved or unavailable) records incidents, assesses risk, arranges support and decides next steps.

4. If you face abuse, threats or violence

1. Protect your safety first: end the call or meeting, move to a safe place, and get help.

2. Call **999** if there is immediate danger, a crime in progress or urgent medical need; use **101** or the police online service otherwise.

3. Report it to the Clerk (or the Chair or Vice-Chair) as soon as possible, giving date, time, who and what happened. You will not be expected to confront the person.

5. What the Council may do

Depending on the seriousness, frequency and context, and with reasonable adjustments for disability or vulnerability, the Council may: give a warning; set communication boundaries (for example contact through a named officer or in writing only); end or adjourn a meeting; ask someone to leave; use extra security; restrict access to non-statutory services; or report the matter to the police. Any restriction must be necessary, proportionate, in writing, time-limited and reviewed. It will not prevent access to statutory services, democratic participation or the Complaints Procedure.

6. Recording and reporting

The Clerk records every incident, preserves evidence and shares information only where there is a lawful and proportionate need. Absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. Serious incidents may be reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR 2013 (death, a specified injury, or an injury that stops a worker doing normal work for more than 7 consecutive days). Records follow the Retention Schedule.

7. Awareness and review

The Council will display notices and information on its website about acceptable behaviour. This policy and the associated risk assessment are reviewed annually and after any serious incident.