

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE
Selflessness – Integrity – Objectivity – Accountability – Openness – Honesty - Leadership

KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

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8 April 2025

A meeting of the Keswick Town Council **Staffing Committee** will be held on Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 10am in the Council Chamber, Keswick Town Hall, Keswick.

Yours sincerely



Vivien Little
Town Clerk

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest in respect to items on this agenda.
- 3. Minutes**
To agree the public minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 21 February 2025 (page 3).
- 4. Policies**
To comment on and make recommendations regarding the list of policies enclosed, and the Sexual Harassment Policy.

Prior to the following business the Chair will move the following resolution:

'That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted'

- 5. Staffing Matters**
To consider the verbal update of the Clerk
- 6. Date of next meeting**
To agree the date of the next meeting.

KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Keswick Town Council Staffing Committee held on Friday 21 February 2025 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber, Keswick Town Hall, Keswick.

Present: Councillor Louise Dunn (Chair)
 Councillor Chris Houghton
 Councillor Claire Houghton
 Councillor Jean Murray
 Councillor Lorraine Taylor
 Christine Fawcett – Parks Manager
 Catherine Parker – Responsible Finance Officer

14. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Vivien Little (Town Clerk).

15. Declarations of Interest

Christine Fawcett declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda.

16. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes, as a correct record, of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 1 November 2024 (page 2).

17. Policies

RECEIVED the Menopause Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Menopause policy be agreed subject to the final paragraph on page 1 being amended to 'This policy should be read alongside Keswick Town Council's sickness policy and any other relevant policy'. The policy to be taken to the next Town Council meeting for final adoption (*Action Clerk*).
- ii) The Sexual Harassment Policy be brought back to the next meeting to allow the Mayor and Town Clerk to discuss this further (*Action Clerk*).

Prior to the following business the Chair moved the following resolution:

'That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted'

18. Staffing Matters

RECEIVED the report of the Parks Manager.

RESOLVED that all three proposals contained within the report be agreed as stated (*Action Clerk*).

19. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 15th April at 10am.

The meeting closed at 10:30am

Chair

Date

KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL
STAFFING COMMITTEE
15 April 2025

List of Policies and Procedures – HR related

See below for a list of current policies which are in place, or are close to being adopted.

Name of Policy	Status	Review Date	Base Source
Equality and Diversity Policy	Adopted – February 2022	February 2025 (due)	SLCC
Menopause Policy	To be adopted – April 2025	April 2027	SLCC
Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy	Adopted – June 2022	June 2025	ACAS/SLCC
Sexual Harassment Policy	To be adopted – May 2025?	April 2027	CALC
Grievance Policy	Adopted Feb 2020	Due	ACAS
Disciplinary Policy	Adopted Feb 2020	Due	ACAS
Sickness Absence Policy	Adopted – April 2018	Due	Matches ACAS/Green Book

Policies to be considered moving forward

Lone Worker Policy (recommended by Worknest)

Violence at Work Policy (recommended by Worknest)

Expenses Policy (for the sake of clarity)

Flexible Working Policy (due to changes in law)

Vivien Little
7 April 2025

Sexual Harassment Policy

Introduction

This policy is intended to cover all Keswick Town Council employees and Councillors. Keswick Town Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all staff, councillors, volunteers and members of the public. We take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment in any form, and this policy sets out our commitment to prevent harassment, provide guidance on reporting incidents, and outlines the steps we will take to address any complaints that arise.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Inappropriate touching or physical contact
- Sexual jokes or comments
- Displaying sexually explicit materials
- Sending sexually explicit emails or messages

Sexual harassment is usually directed at an individual, but it is not always the case.

Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment

In accordance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, effective from 26 October 2024, we have a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This includes:

- Implementing preventative measures such as regular training and clear communication of this policy
- Creating a culture of respect and inclusion
- Taking proactive steps to identify and mitigate risks of sexual harassment

Reporting Procedure

If you experience or witness sexual harassment, you should report it to your line manager. If you do not feel able to do so, report it to the Chair or another councillor. Reports can be made in person, via email or in writing.

Handling Sexual Harassment Complaints

All complaints will be taken seriously and handled promptly and sensitively. If proven, we will take prompt and effective action. Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment may face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. Councillors may also be subject to appropriate actions if found to be engaged in sexual harassment.

Procedure

The process will include

- Acknowledging receipt of the complaint
- Conducting a thorough and impartial investigation

- Keeping all parties informed of the progress
- Ensuring confidentiality as much as possible

Subject to the outcome of an investigation, we may consider a range of formal and, potentially, informal options where both the council and the person making a complaint think this is appropriate.

Informal Action

For example, this might include:

- Explaining to the person who's been complained about why their behaviour was not acceptable and that it needs to change
- Arranging mediation between the people involved.

Formal Action

A formal procedure will be followed either:

- When informal options have not or would not work or be appropriate, or
- A formal complaint is made at the outset.

These will follow the Town Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Disclosure of Sensitive Communications

We will handle sensitive communications with the utmost care. This includes:

- Maintaining the confidentiality of all parties involved
- Ensuring that any sensitive information disclosed during the investigation is protected
- Following legal guidelines on privilege and disclosure to ensure that sensitive communication are only shared with those who need to know.

Supporting People in Speaking Up About Sexual Harassment

We recognise the importance of supporting individuals in speaking up about sexual harassment. We recognise that creating and maintaining an open, respectful culture is key to doing so and, to foster a safe environment for reporting, we will:

- **Reduce Psychological Barriers:** Acknowledge the difficulty of speaking up and provide reassurance that reports will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity.
- **Lessen Social Threats:** Make it clear that the intention of reporting is to improve the workplace environment, not to target individuals
- **Provide Clear Reporting Channels:** Ensure that people know how and where to report incidents, and that they can do so without fear of retaliation
- **Offer Support and Resources:** Provide access to counselling and support services for those who report sexual harassment.
- **Encourage a Speak-Up Culture:** Regularly communicate the importance of speaking up and, if reasonably possible, provide training on how to do so effectively

Additional Steps for Management

We also recognise that creating an open and respectful culture is primarily the responsibility of Keswick Town Council. To further ensure a harassment-free workplace, management will:

- **Include in Policies and Training:** Ensure that our zero tolerance of harassment is properly reflected in other policies, induction and on the job training.
- **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate zero tolerance for sexual harassment through their own behaviour and actions.
- **Communicate clearly:** Communicate the importance of a harassment-free workplace and the steps being taken to ensure it.
- **Report Instances:** Any complaints about sexual harassment will be reported to the Staffing Committee, and if appropriate, other reporting action taken.
- **Regular training:** Conduct annual training sessions for all employees, and councillors, on recognising, preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

Support for Affected Individuals

We will provide support to anyone affected by sexual harassment, including access to counselling services and adjustments to work arrangements if needed.

DRAFT