

MUNGRISDALE PARISH COUNCIL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Document history		
Note of changes	Version number	Date of approval and adoption
Approved & adopted	1	11 May 2026
Reviewed		

Review sheet		
Each entry in the table below summarises the changes to this Policy and procedures made since the last review (if any)		
Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
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MUNGRISDALE PARISH COUNCIL WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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Policy

Mungrisdale Parish Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. The purpose of this policy is to enable the Clerk to raise concerns about wrongdoing at an early stage and in the right way, without fear of detriment.

The Council encourages the Clerk to report any genuine concerns about unlawful conduct, financial irregularity, or other serious governance issues. This policy explains how such concerns can be raised and how they will be handled.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about wrongdoing in the public interest. These are known as “qualifying disclosures”.

A qualifying disclosure is one where the Clerk has a reasonable belief that one of the following is occurring, has occurred, or is likely to occur:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above;

The Clerk does not need to provide proof of wrongdoing — a reasonable belief is sufficient. It is the Council’s responsibility to ensure that any concerns raised are properly considered and investigated.

If the Clerk makes a protected disclosure, they must not be dismissed, victimised, or subjected to any detriment as a result. The Clerk is encouraged to raise concerns under this procedure in the first instance.

Principles

- The Council is committed to preventing and addressing wrongdoing. The Clerk should be alert to any illegal, unethical, or improper conduct and raise concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Any concern raised under this policy will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and confidentially. The Clerk will be informed of the outcome, insofar as confidentiality allows.
- The Clerk will not be victimised or subjected to any detriment for raising a genuine concern.
- Victimisation of the Clerk for making a protected disclosure will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- If misconduct is identified as a result of an investigation, the Council’s disciplinary procedure will be used, alongside any appropriate external reporting.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- Any instruction to conceal wrongdoing is itself misconduct. If the Clerk is told not to raise or pursue a concern, they must report the matter to the **Chair**, or to the **Vice-Chair** if the concern involves the Chair.

Procedure

Concerns about councillor conduct

If the concern relates to a possible breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct, the Clerk should raise it with the **Chair of the Council**. Such concerns will be referred to the **Monitoring Officer at Westmorland and Furness Council** for consideration.

This policy does not cover concerns about the Clerk's own contract of employment. Those should be raised through the Council's **Grievance Procedure**.

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

For all other concerns (financial irregularity, governance issues, legal breaches, health and safety risks, or other wrongdoing), the Clerk should raise the matter with the:

- **Chair of the Council**, or
- **Vice-Chair**, if the concern involves the Chair.

The Chair or Vice-Chair will arrange for the matter to be considered and investigated as appropriate. The Clerk will be informed of the outcome, insofar as confidentiality allows.

Stage 2 – If the Clerk believes the matter has not been properly addressed

If, after raising the concern with the Chair or Vice-Chair, the Clerk reasonably believes that appropriate action has not been taken, the Clerk may raise the matter with a relevant prescribed body.

Stage 3 – External prescribed bodies

The Clerk may report the concern to a prescribed person or body, such as:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- Health and Safety Executive
- Environment Agency
- Serious Fraud Office
- Charity Commission
- Pensions Regulator
- Information Commission
- Financial Conduct Authority

A full list is available in the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014.

Data protection

Any personal data processed under this policy will be handled in accordance with the Council's **Data Protection Policy** and **Employee Privacy Notice**. Information collected from the point at which the Clerk raises a concern will be held securely and accessed only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.