

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Employment handbook

These notes complement the statement of written particulars on your terms of employment.

1 Line manager

You are accountable to the Parish Council through your line manager, a nominated councillor.

2 Hours of work

Your hours of work are as stated in your contract. You are expected to attend Parish Council meetings.

The Council accepts that the hours worked weekly will vary. The Council wishes you to keep a log of hours worked in the prescribed form. You should submit the log to your line manager monthly. The log will be required as evidence of any claim for working additional hours.

3 Holidays

The Council takes a positive view on work/life balance issues and believes that employees should take responsibility for regularly taking annual leave to ensure their own health, safety, and wellbeing.

Annual leave must only be taken with Line Manager approval. You must give at least two weeks' notice.

Jury service

The Council will grant unpaid leave of absence if you undertake jury service.

Additional leave

Additional leave with or without pay may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of your line manager.

Parental leave and time off for dependants

The Council offers the statutory provisions for Parental Leave and time off for unexpected emergencies concerning a dependant.

4 Maternity, paternity and adoption rights

The Council offers the statutory provisions for leave and pay.

5 Sickness absence

If you are absent from work on account of sickness or injury, you or someone on your behalf should inform the Council of the reason for your absence as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the working day on which the absence first occurs. The Council will wish to know:

- The nature of the absence
- The date the injury/illness began (including weekends and holidays)
- The expected duration of the absence
- Whether there are immediate work commitments that need reassigning during the absence.

Periods of sickness up to seven days will require a self-certification form. Longer periods will require a *Statement of Fitness for Work* from your general practitioner.

The Council will keep in contact with you during your absence to keep you up-to-date and monitor your progress. Your line manager will meet you on your return to work to:

- Check you are fit enough to return to work
- Let you voice any concerns you may have and/or identify any home, welfare, or work-related problems
- Ensure that you are aware of work matters that have occurred during your absence
- Fill out the Sickness Declaration Form

The Council may institute a more formal review of attendance and reasons for absence if there has been either four episodes of absence or a total of 10 days' short-term sickness absence in any 12-month period.

The Council may require you at any time to have an examination by an occupational health practitioner nominated by the Council. Any costs associated with the examination will be met by the Council.

6 Appraisal, training and development

You will receive an annual appraisal. Should there be any concern about your performance, other than matters of a disciplinary nature, the Council undertakes to work with you to seek to ensure that necessary training, mentoring and support is provided to ensure that agreed standards of performance are reached in a reasonable agreed time frame.

Your line manager is responsible for managing your performance. S/he will offer mentoring support throughout the year as well as appraisals.

It is essential that you maintain up to date knowledge of your function and duties. To this end, the Council will expect and support your necessary agreed training and development and meet all course and examination expenses and any travel and subsistence incurred on the scale set down as paid working hours. In addition reasonable agreed time for study in paid working hours will be given.

The Council will be responsible for the reasonable costs associated with any training and development that it considers necessary.

7 Expenses

The Council will reimburse approved vehicle travel expenses at the rates approved by HMRC and for other travel against invoices/tickets.

You are not eligible to claim travel expenses to and from your home to Parish Council meetings nor for posting notices on the Council's notice boards.

8 Equality statement

The Parish Council will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect at all times. This applies to all areas of the Council's activities, including employment and provision of services.

9 Statement on bullying and harassment

The Parish Council believes that its employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and that harassment and bullying is totally unacceptable. The Council will deal effectively with any form of harassment or bullying and take any steps it sees fit to either stop or prevent it.

If you consider you are being harassed or bullied, start by talking it over with your manager (or with a councillor, if your complaint concerns your manager and you feel unable to approach him or her).

10 Whistleblowing

The Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability. If you who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, it expects you to come forward and voice those concerns. The Council commits that you can report, in a confidential manner, any concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage,

11 Grievance procedure

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your manager. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

Formal grievance

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally, you should set out the grievance in writing to your manager. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

If your grievance is against your manager and you feel unable to approach him or her, talk to another councillor.

Grievance hearing

Your manager (or other councillor) will call you to a meeting, normally within five days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting your manager will give you a decision in writing, within one week.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with the decision and you wish to appeal, you should let your manager (or councillor) know within one week of receiving the decision.

You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five days. A councillor not previously involved will hear your appeal. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the councillor will give you a decision, normally within one week. That councillor's decision is final.

12 Discipline procedure

The Council's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct or performance. This procedure sets out the action that will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached.

Principles

- The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.
- At every stage you will be informed in writing of what is alleged and have the opportunity to state your case at a disciplinary meeting and be represented or accompanied, if you wish, by a representative.
- You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

The Procedure

Stage 1 – first warning

If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, you will be given a written warning or performance note. Such a warning will be recorded but, after 12 months satisfactory service, it will be disregarded. You will also be informed that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. (Where the first offence is sufficiently serious, for example because it is having, or is likely to have, a serious harmful effect on the organisation, it may be justifiable to move directly to a final written warning.)

Stage 2 – final written warning

If the offence is serious, or there is no improvement in standards, or if a further offence of a similar kind occurs, a final written warning will be given which will include the reason for the warning and a note that if no improvement results within 3 months, action at Stage 3 will be taken.

Stage 3 – dismissal

If the conduct or performance has failed to improve, you may be dismissed.

Gross misconduct

If, after investigation, it is confirmed that you have committed an offence of the following nature (the list is not exhaustive), the normal consequence will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice: theft, damage to property, fraud, incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, physical violence, bullying and gross insubordination.

While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, you may be suspended, during which time you will be paid your normal pay rate. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by the employer only after full investigation.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against any disciplinary decision you must do so to the named person in the Council within five working days. The employer will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.