



Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Record of Amendments and Reviews

<u>Version</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Date of Adoption</u>
1	Adopted - Agenda Item 14	25 February 2025

Next review required by:	Feb 2026
--------------------------	----------

DARTMOOR FOREST PARISH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

DARTMOOR FOREST PARISH COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO THE HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 AND VULNERABLE ADULTS WHO ARE EITHER RESIDENT IN OR VISITING THE VILLAGE.

None of the current activities of the Parish Council involves any Councillor coming into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. However, all Councillors are asked to remember that it is their responsibility to ensure that:

- Their behaviour is appropriate at all times
- They observe the rules established for the safety and security of young and vulnerable people
- They follow the procedures in the event of suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse
- They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.

Should Parish Council activities at any time require contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, then a risk assessment will be undertaken with consideration for the requirement of thorough background checks, such as DBS checks, for those persons involved.

Policy Statement

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All including children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from harm;
- Everyone (i.e. Councillors, council staff, volunteers), are aware of the expected behaviours and the organisation's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all including children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- This Policy has been developed in line with government legislation, publications and guidance. Dartmoor Forest Parish Council takes seriously its responsibility under the current legislation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults; and to work together with other agencies to ensure that there are adequate arrangements within our organisation to identify and support those who are suffering harm. Where someone is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that person.
- Dartmoor Forest Parish Council recognises that for this Policy to be effective, it is essential that everyone working in and for the organisation has an understanding of what safeguarding is, know that 'safeguarding is everybody's responsibility', know how to access safeguarding information, know of any possible contribution that they may be required to make to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and how to access further advice, support or services.

Parish Clerk Jackie Bennetts is designated as Safeguarding Lead and Cllr Hazel Williams as Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Policy Objectives

- To ensure that where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Parish Council are designed and maintained to limit risk.
- To promote the general welfare, health and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a local government organisation.
- To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.
- As the Parish Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children and vulnerable adults, it expects all children and vulnerable adults using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent, carer or other responsible adult.

Individual Responsibilities

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council recognises that safeguarding is not just about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm. It also relates to health and safety; meeting the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults with medical conditions; providing first aid; visits organised or sponsored by the council; internet or e-safety; and appropriate arrangements to ensure security, taking into account the local context.

We will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with and in the presence of children at any time.

Community users organising activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of and understand the need for compliance with the council's Safeguarding Procedures. These responsibilities also extend to all open spaces managed by the Parish Council and any activities undertaken there.

Should we dismiss or remove someone because they have harmed a child, or poses a risk of harm to a child or would have done so if they had not left, we will report this to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any appropriate professional or regulatory body.

Our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually.

If a child, young person or adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, we will:

- Stay calm and listen carefully. At no point will we question, investigate or query or any statement made;
- Not promise to keep what they have been told a secret;
- Inform the Safeguarding Lead (Parish Clerk Jackie Bennetts) as soon as possible; and
- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which will be signed, and dated in the Parish Council incident and accident book which is held by the Parish Clerk, contact 07508 330873, email clerk@dartmoorforestparishcouncil.gov.uk.
- The Safeguarding Lead will immediately contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). They may need whoever is instigating the report to be available to answer further questions. Confidentiality and Information Sharing Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. A key factor identified in many serious case reviews (SCRs) has been a failure by practitioners to record information, to share it to understand its significance and then take appropriate action.
- We recognise that all matters relating to protection are confidential;

- We will disclose personal information about a child, young person or adult on a need to know basis only;
- Everyone is aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, young person or adult;
- Everyone is aware that they cannot promise to keep secrets which might compromise the safety or well-being of a child, young person or adult, or that of another; and
- We will always undertake to share our concerns with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), unless to do so could put the child, young person or adult at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with MASH.
Contact information: Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on: tel. 0345 155 1071, or email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

Managing allegations against individuals who work for us

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against someone who works for our organisation, or volunteers that are working with or may come into contact with children, young person or adults. They can be made by anyone. Everyone in our organisation and volunteers has been made aware of the process to be followed if such an allegation is made. In such circumstances we will:

- Report the matter to the MASH.
- Consider the safeguarding arrangements of the child, young person or adult to ensure they are not in contact with the alleged abuser;
- Consider the rights of the individual concerned for a fair and equal process of investigation;
- Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedure is followed, including whether suspending that person from work or volunteering for us until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary;
- Advise the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any other appropriate regulatory or professional body where the individual has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations founded, or would have been if they have resigned.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Everyone will be advised on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour – such matters form part of our staff and volunteer induction and they have access to support and guidance when required or requested. All new Councillors are to be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it. Councillors will adhere to the ‘List of Recommended Behaviour’, namely:

- A minimum of two adults present when supervising children/vulnerable adults.
- Not to play physical contact games
- Adults to wear appropriate clothing at all times
- Ensure that accidents are recorded in the Parish Council incident and accident book.
- Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.
- Recognise that family connections or friendships do not supersede these rules if acting in any capacity on behalf of the Parish Council.

We recognise that staff and volunteers working in our organisation who have become involved in the case of a child who has suffered harm, or appears likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. Our Safeguarding Lead and / or anyone working for the organisation has access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised or recommended by the Safeguarding Standards Unit (SSU) or Local Authority (LA).

Prevention

We recognise that we can play a significant part in the prevention of harm to children, young persons or vulnerable adults by providing them with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Our organisation will support children, young persons or adults by:

- Establishing and maintaining an ethos, understood by everyone, which enables children, young people or adults to feel secure and encourages them to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment ensuring that all children, young people or adults know that there is someone in our organisation whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children and adults.

Training

Everyone has been provided with, and signed to say that they have read and understood our Safeguarding Policy. Everyone will have access to appropriate Safeguarding training which is regularly updated in order to keep it in line with local and national guidance/legislation. We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Safeguarding Policy and any other policy and information related to Safeguarding and promoting our Safeguarding Policy to all newly appointed individuals.

If you are a child, young person or vulnerable adult and you feel unhappy about something happening to you, you can contact the follow support agencies:

Childline, tel: 0800 11 11

Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), tel: 0345 155 1071, or email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

Devon's Domestic Abuse Helpline, tel: 0345 155 1074

Rape Crisis Helpline, tel: 0808 802 9999