

Proposal: Civility and Respect

It is proposed that Fulbeck Parish Council commit to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Civility and Respect Pledge together with implementation of the associated Dignity at Work Policy.

ABOUT

Throughout the sector, there are growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment, and intimidation are having on local (parish and town) councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the resulting effectiveness of local councils.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales (OVW), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations have responded to this by setting up a Civility and Respect Working Group to oversee the Civility and Respect Project.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

NALC, SLCC, and OVW believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced because there is no place for bullying, harassment and intimidation within our sector. The pledge is easy for councils to sign up for and it will enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across our sector and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.

NALC invite all councils to take the Civility and Respect Pledge.

By signing the Pledge, Fulbeck Parish Council is agreeing that the council will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

- Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors
- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the local **Local Council Award Scheme**
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

The Dignity at Work policy is the first of a series of new or revised governance documents which are being developed by the project team. The documents have been reviewed by a focus group made up of clerks, councillors, monitoring officers, and county associations.

The Dignity at Work policy will replace any previous bullying and harassment policy. It encompasses behaviours beyond bullying and harassment and zero-tolerance to deal with concerns before they escalate. It has been produced with supporting guidance because it is essential that any commitment to the policy is applied in practice.

The wording has been suggested to demonstrate a council's commitment to promoting dignity and respect where they have signed up to the **Civility and Respect Pledge**. Councils who have not signed up for this are requested to consider making this pledge which is based on basic behaviours and expectations of all council representatives to create workplaces that allow people to maintain their dignity at all times.

(See separate document)

TRAINING

Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) does not currently provide the approved training, through Nimble, for the Civility and Respect Pledge.

However, Fulbeck Parish Council commit that all Councillors will complete the relevant Councillor training course within six months of taking post or of committing to this Pledge, and at least once in every four-year term to ensure they keep up with changes in regulation.

Each Chair and Vice Chair will further commit to complete the relevant Chair training for this post within six months of taking the Chair or Vice Chair post.

Councillors will also commit to carrying out appropriate training as identified from time to time to enhance their role within the Parish Council.