

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

- ✉ **Postal Address:** Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA
- ☎ **Telephone:** (01727) 825 314
- 💻 **Website:** <https://colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk>
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FRAUD POLICY

1. Background

Colney Heath Parish Council has a commitment to high legal, ethical and moral standards and all employees are expected to share this commitment. This Policy is established to facilitate the development of procedures, which will aid in the investigation of fraud and related offences. The Parish Council has procedures in place that reduce the likelihood of fraud occurring including rules, documented procedures and documented systems of internal control and risk assessment and in addition tries to ensure that a risk (and fraud) awareness culture exists in the Parish Council. This Policy is intended to provide direction and help to employees who find themselves having to deal with suspected cases of theft, fraud or corruption and give a framework for a response and advice and information on various aspects and implications of an investigation but not to provide direction on prevention of fraud.

2. Policy

The Parish Council is absolutely committed to maintaining an honest, open and well-intentioned atmosphere within the business and therefore is also committed to the elimination of any fraud within the Parish Council and to the rigorous investigation of any such cases.

The Parish Council requires anyone having reasonable suspicions or incidents of fraud to report them immediately to the Clerk. With fraudulent activity there must be some form of gain or benefit either personal or for another person and some examples are:-

- obtaining any benefit (monetary or otherwise) by deception
- deliberately altering documentation
- credit or debit card abuse
- falsifying personal information
- making false written declarations
- submitting known false statistical information to artificially enhance business or personal performance.

It is also the Parish Council's policy that no employee will suffer in any way as a result of reporting reasonably held suspicions. Employees can therefore be confident that they will not suffer in any way as a result of reporting reasonably held suspicions of fraud. For these purposes, reasonably held "suspicions" means any suspicions other than those, which are raised maliciously and found

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to be groundless. The Parish Council will deal with all occurrences in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Fraud comprises both the use of deception to obtain an unjust or illegal financial advantage and intentional misrepresentations affecting the financial statements by one or more individuals among the Councillors, Parish Council management, employees or third parties.

This Policy applies to any irregularity, or suspected irregularity, involving employees as well as consultants, suppliers, contractors and/or any other parties with a business relationship with this Parish Council. Any investigation required will be conducted without regard to any person's relationship to the Parish Council, position or length of service. Everyone in the Parish Council has a duty to familiarise themselves with the types of improprieties that might be expected to occur within their areas of responsibility and to be alert for any indications or irregularity.

3. Enforcement

Such steps as may be appropriate to ensure that this Policy remains effective will be taken by the Parish Council and the Parish Council Disciplinary Procedure will be used with, in serious breaches of the Policy, it resulting in summary dismissal.

4. Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council, as appropriate, to assess its effectiveness or as required by legislation and any appropriate changes will be made in consultation with employees.

This policy was adopted 27th February 2023 for a period of 2 years or until legislation changes.