



Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Council Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children and vulnerable adults, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Council (OBLPC). This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff, councillors, volunteers or contractors associated with OBLPC.
- The design and implementation of OBLPC's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by OBLPC and informs staff, councillors and associated contractors of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by OBLPC or associated personnel.

What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In OBLPC we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, including councilors and volunteers, or our facilities.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided below.

Policy Statement

OBLPC believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. OBLPC will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

OBLPC undertakes a wide range of services through which OBLPC employees, councillors and volunteers may encounter vulnerable people during the course of their work. Although the extent and frequency of this contact may be varied, everyone has a responsibility to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues and must be aware of this policy and associated procedures.

The Senior Responsible Officer for safeguarding is the Parish Council Chairperson. On a day-to-day basis the main point of contact for raising safeguarding issues will be the Parish Clerk.

This policy is written in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 and associated guidance. The Parish Council works in partnership with a number of agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in the Parish, including Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC), whose policies and procedures have been utilised in the preparation of this document. BDBC have overriding responsibility for safeguarding issues across the Borough, under the leadership of the Executive Director of Borough Services, supported by Designated Safeguarding Officers.

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OBLPC expects third party organisations using Parish Council land or amenities to develop their own safeguarding policies to protect people engaged in their activities.

OBLPC commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Scope

The scope of this policy is in respect of this Parish Council's responsibility towards: -

- Children and young people; legally defined as any person under the age of 18.
- Vulnerable adults; defined in the Care Act as 'an adult at risk of abuse or neglect with care and support needs'.
- All staff employed by OBLPC or associated employees and contractors who will come into contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- Parish councillors when carrying out Parish Council business.
- All volunteers and officials of third party organisations who undertake activities using Parish Council land or amenities.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people is defined as: -

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up and living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances.

Adult safeguarding is defined as: -

- Protecting adults with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Protecting an adult's right to live safely and free from abuse and neglect.

Prevention

OBLPC will:

- Ensure all staff have access to and are familiar with their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with OBLPC. This includes the way in which information about individuals is gathered and communicated.
- Implement safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.
- Seek support from BDBC Designated Safeguarding Officers on any matters relating to safeguarding in the Parish.

Additionally, OBLPC staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

Safeguarding Policy cont'd.....

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an OBLPC staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Reporting

OBLPC will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, volunteers and the organisations with which we work.

OBLPC will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

Staff members or other personnel who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Senior Responsible Officer or the Parish Clerk. If they do not feel comfortable reporting to the Senior Responsible Officer or the Parish Clerk they may report to any other appropriate staff member or Parish Councillor. In extremis, a report can be made directly to the Borough Council Designated Safeguarding Officers at safeguarding@basingstoke.gov.uk.

In the event of an emergency and no other reporting method being readily available the Police should be contacted on 999.

Response

OBLPC will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

OBLPC will follow the Borough Council procedures for responding to safeguarding incidents within the Parish Council boundary. Procedures available on request from the Parish Clerk.

OBLPC will apply appropriate measures to staff or any other personnel found in breach of policy.

A safeguarding incident, by its very nature, can constitute a criminal offence. OBLPC will seek advice from Borough Council Designated Safeguarding Officers but reserve the right to report incidents to the Police for further action, as required.

OBLPC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and the response to any incident should be proportionate to that aim.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.