PINEWOOD

PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2026

Policy Statement

Pinewood Parish Council is committed to promoting the welfare, health, safety, and wellbeing of all individuals who use the Community Hall and participate in Parish Council activities.

The Council recognises its responsibility to safeguard and protect:

- Children and young people (under 18 years of age).
- Adults at risk who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation.
- Volunteers, staff, councillors, hirers, and visitors.

The Council operates a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate behaviour.

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a safe environment for all users of the Community Hall.
- Promote good practice among councillors, employees, volunteers, and hirers.
- Ensure concerns about abuse or neglect are identified and acted upon appropriately.
- Set out clear reporting procedures.
- Comply with relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish Councillors
- Parish Council employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors working on behalf of the Council
- Community Hall hirers
- Activity leaders and organisers using the Hall
- Anyone participating in Council-organised activities or in-house events.

Definitions

Child

- A person under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk

A person over the age of 18, who:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- May be unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

Types of Abuse

Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

Children

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Exploitation

Adults at Risk

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect

Responsibilities

Parish Council

The Parish Council will:

- Promote safeguarding awareness.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are taken seriously.
- Maintain appropriate procedures for reporting concerns.
- Cooperate with statutory agencies.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
Name: Mr Tim Collard
Position: Pinewood Parish Councillor and Chair of HR Committee
Contact Details: clerk@pinewoodparishcouncil.gov.uk

The DSO is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Maintaining safeguarding records securely.
- Liaising with police, social care, and other agencies where necessary.
- Providing guidance to councillors, staff, and volunteers.

Councillors, Staff and Volunteers

All councillors, staff and volunteers must:

- Take reasonable steps to protect children and adults at risk.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Follow this policy and associated procedures.

Community Hall Hire

Organisations and individuals hiring the Community Hall remain responsible for safeguarding within their activities.

Hall hirers must:

- Ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place where children or adults at risk are involved.
- Undertake any required DBS checks for staff or volunteers.
- Comply with health and safety requirements.
- Report safeguarding concerns occurring during activities.
- Provide evidence of safeguarding policies if requested by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse or cancel bookings if safeguarding concerns arise.

Safer Working Practices

Councillors, employees and volunteers should:

Always

- Treat people with dignity and respect.
- Work in an open and transparent manner.
- Listen carefully to concerns.
- Promote equality and inclusion.

Never

- Engage in inappropriate physical contact.
- Use abusive, discriminatory, or offensive language.
- Share personal contact details with children without appropriate consent and oversight.
- Be alone with a child where it can be avoided.
- Ignore allegations or concerns.

Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting

Any safeguarding concern should be taken seriously.

Where someone:

- Discloses abuse.
- Shows signs of abuse or neglect.
- Raises concerns about another person's welfare.

The person receiving the concern should:

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Reassure the individual.
4. Avoid asking leading questions.
5. Record facts accurately.
6. Report immediately to the DSO.

Do not:

- Promise confidentiality.
- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Confront the alleged perpetrator.

Immediate Danger

If a person is at immediate risk of harm:

Call 999 immediately.

Following emergency action, inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will be:

- Shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Handled in accordance with data protection legislation.
- Stored securely.

Confidentiality must never prevent appropriate reporting where someone is at risk of harm.

Recruitment and DBS Checks

Where the Parish Council directly recruits staff or volunteers to work with children or adults at risk, the Council will:

- Follow safer recruitment practices.
- Obtain references where appropriate.
- Carry out enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks when legally required.
- Ensure suitable induction and support are provided.

Record Keeping

The Council will maintain:

- Safeguarding concern reports.
- Incident records.
- Referral information.
- Relevant correspondence.

Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the Council's retention schedule and data protection requirements.

Training and Awareness

The Parish Council will:

- Provide safeguarding awareness information to councillors, staff and volunteers.
- Ensure the DSO receives appropriate safeguarding training.
- Review safeguarding arrangements regularly.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Community Hall Hire Terms and Conditions
- Lone Working Policy
- Communications, Website and Social Media Policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- Guidance changes.
- A safeguarding incident indicates a review is necessary.

This policy was approved by the Community Hall Management Committee on 28 July 2026.

This policy was adopted by Pinewood Parish Council on 8 September 2026
Review date: September 2028