NEEN SAVAGE PARISH COUNCIL

Employment Policies and Procedures

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding all aspects of employment including roles and responsibilities of the Council as an employer and for all employees.
1.2 Some sections are also relevant to volunteers who assist the Council in various activities such as environmental maintenance and on committees.
1.3 Council will adhere to all employment laws including Employment Rights Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. Further advice and information will be utilized from National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services (The Green Book), NALC's Good Councillor Guide, NALC's Being a Good Employer Guide as well as Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for members.

2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

2.1 The recruitment and selection of staff is of prime importance to ensure that the Council employs the best possible person-to-job fit. This will contribute significantly towards the Council's effectiveness. It is also becoming increasingly important, as the Council evolves, that new recruits show a willingness to learn, adaptability and ability to work as part of a team.
2.2 The Recruitment & Selection procedure will be fair and consistent; be non-discriminatory on the grounds of sex, race, age, religion or disability; conform to statutory regulations and agreed best practice.
2.3 To ensure that these policy aims are achieved, all members of the Employment Sub-Committee will receive training in effective recruitment and selection.

3 CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

3.1 All employees will be issued with a Contract of Employment covering all terms and conditions of employment including: Job title, Duties as per job description, place of work, Salary and pensions, hours of work, re-imbursement of operational expenses including mileage and those incurred due to working from home; holiday leave, Jury Service, parental, maternity leave and adoption rights; sickness absence; notice periods, disciplinary and grievance procedures. The Council offers the statutory provisions for leave and pay.

4 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Council expects all employees to attend regular relevant training. Council shall be responsible for all costs associated with any training and development that it considers necessary. Employees to notify Council of request/wish to attend training and report back on courses attended.

5 APPRAISALS

Employees will receive an annual appraisal with the Employment Sub-Committee. This appraisal will provide an opportunity for employee and employer to discuss how role is working; hours and other contractual conditions will be reviewed and a report with any recommendations made to Council at the next meeting. Should there be any concern about performance, other than matters of a disciplinary nature, the Council undertakes to work with the employee to seek to ensure that necessary training, mentoring and support is provided to ensure that agreed standards of performance are reached in a reasonable agreed time frame. A line manager is responsible for managing performance and will offer mentoring support throughout the year. It is essential that employees maintain up to date knowledge of their function and duties. To this end, the Council will expect and support necessary agreed training and development and meet all course and examination expenses and any travel and subsistence incurred on the scale set down as paid working hours. In addition, reasonable agreed time for study in paid working hours will be given.

6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY - EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 The Council will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone is treated equally and fairly and with dignity and respect at all times. This applies to all areas of the Council's activities, including employment and provision of services.

6.2 The Council will aim to ensure that no-one involved in Council activities receives less favorable treatment on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We aim to represent all sections of society and oppose all discrimination or victimization.

7 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

7.1 The Council believes that its employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and are not subjected to any unacceptable behavior that is abusive, offensive or threatening. Those acting unreasonably must be asked to change their attitude but if the behavior continues it will be reported to the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee. Restrictions may be imposed on those whose conduct is unacceptable. In formal cases Council will write to inform the person of what action is being taken against them. If the behavior is extreme and threatens safety other options will be taken such as reporting to police or taking legal action.

7.2 Any form of bullying is totally unacceptable. The Council will deal effectively with any form of harassment or bullying and take any steps it sees fit to either stop or prevent it. If an employee considers they are being harassed or bullied, they should start by talking it over with the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee (or with another member of the Employment Sub-Committee, if the complaint concerns the Chairman and they feel unable to approach him/her). If the matter is not resolved the matter can be raised as a grievance.

8 WHISTLEBLOWING

The Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. If anyone has serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, it expects them to come forward and voice those concerns. The Council commits that people can report, in a confidential manner, any concerns without fear of victimization, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

9 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

9.1 Council aims to ensure there are good relationships between Council members and employees. Council aims to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently. Council aims to see grievances settled as soon as they are raised and to ensure Council treats grievances seriously and resolves them as quickly as possible. If anyone has a grievance or complaint to do with their work or the people they work with they should, wherever possible, raise it with the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

9.2 Formal grievance - If the matter is serious one wishes to raise the matter formally, they should set out the grievance in writing to the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee. If the grievance is against the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee and one feels unable to approach him/her, talk to another member of the Employment Sub-Committee.

9.3 Grievance hearing - Line Manager (or other councillor) will call employee to a meeting, normally within 14 days, to discuss the grievance. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if made by a reasonable request. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the meeting to be investigated or to give more time to consider a decision. After the meeting the Line Manager will give the employee a decision in writing, within one week.

9.4 Appeals - If the employee is unhappy with the decision and wishes to appeal, they should let their Line Manager (or councillor) know within one week of receiving the decision. The employee will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five days. A councillor

not previously involved will hear the appeal. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if made by a reasonable request. After the meeting, the Appeal hearing Chairman will give the employee a decision, normally within one week.

10 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

10.1 The Council's aim is that all employees achieve and maintain high standards of conduct whilst at work or representing the Council. Council aims to encourage improvement in individual conduct or performance. This procedure sets out the action that will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached. The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated. At every stage the employee will be informed in writing of what is alleged and have the opportunity to state their case at a disciplinary meeting and be represented or accompanied, if required, by a representative. The employee has the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

10.2 Misconduct which will normally give rise to disciplinary action may include unauthorized absence, poor performance, disruptive behavior, failure to follow procedures.

Disciplinary Procedure

Stage 1 – first warning. If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, or a minor issue - a verbal warning will be issued. Such a warning will be recorded but, after 6 months satisfactory service, it will be disregarded.

Stage 2 – second minor or on-going occurrence or first serious occurrence – a written warning will be issued. The employee will also be informed that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. (Where the first offence is sufficiently serious, for example because it is having, or is likely to have, a serious harmful effect on the organization, it may be justifiable to move directly to a final written warning.)

Stage 3 – final written warning - If the offence is serious, or there is no improvement in standards, or if a further offence of a similar kind occurs, a final written warning will be given which will include the reason for the warning and a note that if no improvement results within 3 months, action at Stage 4 will be taken.

Stage 4 – dismissal - If the conduct or performance has failed to improve, the employee may be dismissed.

10.3 Gross misconduct - If, after investigation, it is confirmed that the employee has committed an offence of the following nature (the list is not exhaustive): theft, misuse of or damage to Council property, fraud, incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, physical violence, bullying, harassment and gross insubordination, the normal consequence will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, you may be suspended, during which time you will be paid your normal pay rate. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by the Council only after full investigation.

10.4 Appeals If an employee wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision they must do so to the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee within five working days. The Council will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

11 WORKING CONDITIONS

11.1 The Council takes a positive view on work/life balance issues and believes that employees should take responsibility for flexible working conditions and regularly take annual leave to ensure they consider their other responsibilities and commitments but also recognize the need to take leave for their health, safety and well-being. Holidays are required to be taken but also Council is supportive of additional leave in special circumstances. Annual leave must only be taken with approval from the Chairman of the

Employment Sub-Committee. At least two weeks' notice should be given. The Council will grant unpaid leave of absence if an employee undertakes jury service. Additional leave with or without pay may be granted in special circumstances such as for unexpected emergencies concerning a dependent.

11.2 Lone Working – Council appreciates that employees often have to work on their own and as such both parties should ensure a good system of communication, and take such precautions for their safety and well-being.

11.3 Sickness Procedures. If an employee is absent from work on account of sickness or injury, they or someone on their behalf should inform the Council of the reason for the absence as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the working day on which the absence first occurs. The Council will wish to know: The nature of the absence, the date the injury/illness began (including weekends and holidays), the expected duration of the absence, whether there are immediate work commitments that need reassigning during the absence. Periods of sickness up to seven days will require a self-certification form. Longer periods will require a Statement of Fitness for Work from their general practitioner. The Council will keep in contact with employees during any absence to keep them up-to-date and monitor their progress. The Line Manager will meet employees on their return to work to check that they are fit enough to return to work, let the employee voice any concerns they may have and/or identify any home, welfare, or work-related problems, ensure that the employee is aware of work matters that have occurred during the absence.

The Council may institute a more formal review of attendance and reasons for absence if there has been either four episodes of absence or a total of 10 days' short-term sickness absence in any 12-month period. The Council may require an employee at any time to have an examination by an occupational health practitioner nominated by the Council. Any costs associated with the examination will be met by the Council.

11.4 Code of Conduct for Employees all employees are expected to work in a safe manner, act in a professional manner; ensure good working relationships between themselves, councillors, contractors and the public.

12 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

12.1 Neen Savage Parish Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees, volunteers and others who may be involved with Council activities. Council will as reasonably practicable comply with our statutory obligations with regards to managing health, safety and welfare of all those affected by Council activities. This policy provides information on everyone's legal duties and responsibilities. Council aims to promote the awareness and best practice of health and safety culture with everyone. We endeavor to manage our activities so that people do not face unacceptable risks. Council is committed to continual improvement and will review this policy at appropriate intervals and at least annually, to ensure that it continues to provide high standards of health and safety.

12.2 As an employer we have a duty to our employees to ensure they are aware of and understand their legal responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation. Council will provide information training to those involved with Council activities to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Council will identify hazards and risks and assess these to ensure suitable measures are in place to minimize risks to an acceptable level, ensure that working practices are safe for employees, volunteers, contractors and any others who may be affected by our activities. Council aims to provide and maintain a safe place of work, safe equipment and a safe and healthy working environment. Council will ensure that health and safety is considered when changing activities. Council will undertake risk assessments for all new activities and review on-going activities on a regular basis. Council will keep a record of all Risk Assessments conducted and ensure adequate insurance is in place. Council will record all accidents and report to relevant bodies such as Health and Safety Executive if required.

12.3 All individuals, whether employees, volunteers or contractors are responsible to take reasonable care for the health and safety themselves and other who may be affected by their activities. They must follow all safe working procedures as instructed. They must use all personal protective equipment as provided and not intentionally or recklessly misuse or interfere with any equipment. Volunteers and contractors using their own equipment must have Public Liability insurance cover and also ensure their equipment is safe, in good working conditions, complies with British Standards and be suitably certified. Previously unidentified risks or hazards not notified in the risk assessments must be reported to the project leader/Council immediately. All accidents, near misses or damage to equipment or property must be reported to the project leader/Council as soon as possible and recorded. Employees must report any medical condition or use of medication which may affect their safety at work. Work must not be undertaken if under the influence of either alcohol or illegal drugs. To ensure a safe working environment all work areas must be kept tidy. Spillages or tripping hazards must be cleared as soon as possible. Rubbish, waste and any hazardous substances must be disposed of in appropriate manner.

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Policy Review Date: May 2025