



Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted by Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council on: 12th October 2023

Next Review Due: 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council acknowledge our responsibilities to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults (vulnerable people). This policy outlines how we will promote the safety and welfare of vulnerable people using Parish Council facilities.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy is for use by all Councillors, staff, volunteers and those associated with Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council.

3. Purpose of this policy

3.1. To provide protection for the vulnerable people who use the Parish Council's facilities

3.2. To provide Councillors, staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a vulnerable person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

3.3. To provide guidance and procedures they should adopt regarding possible allegations against Councillors, staff or volunteers.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

4.1. **Children and Young People** are any persons under the age of 18 years.

4.2. **Safeguarding children** is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) as:

- Preventing children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

4.3. **Child protection** is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm'.

4.4. **Significant harm** is defined in The Children Act 1989 as 'the ill treatment or impairment of health and development'. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include, "for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another". Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm (see appendix 1)

4.5. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) states that any professionals with concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's social care.

4.6. **Vulnerable Adults** are any persons over 18 who are:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

4.7. **Safeguarding vulnerable adults** means protecting them from maltreatment and preventing injury or significant harm. Abuse violates an adult's human and civil rights. It can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

4.8. **Vulnerable People** are defined as children, young adults or vulnerable adults.

5. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council Facilities

5.1. Any possible safeguarding concerns regarding vulnerable people that occur at Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council facilities must be reported immediately to Social Services or the Police and when appropriate, the Parish Clerk. See section 9 of this policy.

6. Recreation Ground and Play Facilities

6.1. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council provides Recreation Grounds with play equipment (Ball Field, Jubilee Field and Crane Valley) for the children and young people of the parish.

6.2. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council will provide safe facilities and undertake regular safety assessments of these.

6.3. All children and young people under the age of 18 visiting the Recreation Ground remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians whilst using these facilities.

6.4. Any concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, vandalism or possible criminal activity will be reported to the Police.

6.5. The Parish Council shall provide contractors employed to maintain its facilities with a copy of this Policy and remind them of the need to ensure that they conduct their work in a manner that will obviate accusation of harming children in the vicinity.

7. Vestry Hall Complex Facilities

7.1. When hiring to groups for use with children, young people or vulnerable adults the Parish Council will require the hirer to:

- Have public liability insurance
- Have a suitable safeguarding policy and/or agree to work to the Parish Council's policy and relevant guidance
- Ensure leaders make their members aware of the Parish Council Policy and ensure that it is followed whilst using parish facilities
- Ensure leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate and know where the first aid boxes are and how to summon help from the Emergency Services
- Do risk assessments for individual activities

8. Contact with Vulnerable People

8.1. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Councillors, staff and volunteers are not required to undertake activities that involve them being on their own with vulnerable people and are asked not to put themselves in possible vulnerable situations.

8.2. We ask that Councillors, staff and volunteers recognise their position of trust in the local community and behave appropriately at all times.

8.3. All Councillors, staff and volunteers must adhere to these safeguarding procedures and report any issues or concerns accordingly.

8.4. Any concerns about a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer and their conduct or contact with vulnerable people must be raised immediately with the Parish Clerk and the relevant authorities (see section below).

9. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

9.1. Any concerns regarding the welfare of vulnerable people in the parish should be reported immediately to the relevant social care team.

9.2. During the day and in office hours:

- **Concerned about an adult?** Call 03000 41 61 61 (text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.
- **Concerned about a child?** Call 03000 41 11 11 (text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

9.3. Out of hours and in an emergency

- If you need to contact Social Services outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call 03000 41 91 91.
- **If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call 999 for the emergency services.**
- If you have concerns about a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 03000 41 08 88 or kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk.

9.4. When appropriate the Parish Council can also be contacted:

Clerk to the Parish Council
Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council Office
The Old Fire Station
Stone Street
Cranbrook

Tel: 01580 713112

10. Procedures to be followed by a member of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council in the event of a concern being reported to them.

10.1. If you are approached by a vulnerable person, with a disclosure that they are being, or has been harmed or abused, or you are informed of such a disclosure by a colleague or member of the public,

Do:

- Stay calm.
- Provide a listening ear and an open mind.
- Be reassuring, particularly that the individual is doing the right thing by telling you.
- Record the information you are provided with and report as quickly as possible to your Parish Clerk who will decide what further action will need to be taken.
- Make it clear that you have a duty to refer the matter on and that the information is likely to be shared with the relevant persons on a need-to-know basis.
- Make a record of the time, date and persons present.

10.2. Allegations against Parish Councillors, staff or volunteers:

Don't:

- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Stop the individual who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make the individual tell anyone else. They may have to be formally interviewed later and it is important to minimise the number of times information is repeated.
- Make any suggestions to the individual about how the incident may have happened.
- Never ask a child why this happened or ask leading questions.
- Use your own words – note down the exact child's words
- Question the individual, except to clarify what they are saying.
- Discuss the information with anyone other than the Parish Clerk, or the relevant safeguarding professionals involved.

10.3 All Councillors, members of staff and volunteers should take care not to put themselves in potentially vulnerable situations. For example, inappropriate use of the internet or being alone with a vulnerable person at the parish facilities.

10.4. If you are concerned that a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer is harming or abusing a vulnerable person, or acting inappropriately in their behaviour or conduct, you must immediately

report your concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Social Services department or Police.

10.5. If a person, such as a member of the public reports safeguarding concerns to you about a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer then you must immediately inform the Parish Clerk who will report your concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Social Services department or Police.

10.6. If the allegation is against the Parish Clerk, then another suitably senior member of staff should be contacted immediately, or you can contact the LADO directly for advice and consultation.

10.7. No attempt should be made to investigate the allegation before consultation has been made with the LADO.

10.8. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council adhere to the Kent County Council Managing Allegations Against Staff Practice Guidance (March 2017) and KCC procedures, which can be accessed via the Kent Safeguarding Children Board website www.kscmp.org.uk.