

HARPOLE PARISH COUNCIL



Chairman – Mr F Smethers

Clerk – Mrs S Willis

<http://www.harpole-pc.gov.uk>

E-mail: clerk@harpole-pc.gov.uk

All members of the Council are summoned to attend the Annual Meeting of Harpole Parish Council at Harpole Methodist Chapel, School Lane, Harpole on **Monday 12th May 2025** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

Signed:

Sally Willis

Clerk & Proper Officer to Harpole Parish Council

Date: 6th May 2025

AGENDA

1/25 TO ELECT CHAIRMAN FOR 2025/26

2/25 TO ELECT VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2025/26

3/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4/25 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For councillors to sign acceptance of office for new term and make approvals for any absentand to remind all councillors of requirement to file declarations of interest and election expenses to West Northants Council.

5/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillors are reminded that if they have either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other interest in any of the agenda items then they should declare that interest and withdraw from the debate or the meeting as appropriate.

6/25 PRESENTATION FROM EDF RENEWABLES REGARDING THE WORKS RELATED TO THE GLASSTHORPE SOLAR FARM

7/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are invited to address the Council. The session will last for a maximum of 15 minutes with contributions lasting a maximum of 3 minutes. Members of the public should address their representations through the chairman of the meeting.

8/25 REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS

To welcome the Unitary Councillor(s) to the meeting and provide an opportunity for them to update members and residents on matters of interest.

9/25 COUNCIL MINUTES

To receive and approve the minutes of Council Meeting dated Monday 10th March 2025

HARPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

10/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Infrastructure Committee held on 31st March and 28th April and the and Strategy, Finance and Policy Committee held on 7th April

11/25 QUESTIONS FOR CHAIRMAN RELATING TO RECEIVED MINUTES

12/25 CO-OPTION

To fill vacancy by co-option due to insufficient candidates standing for election

13/25 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

To approve that the council qualifies for the General Power of Competence and will formally adopt it

14/25 MEMBERSHIP TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- a) To consider change to committee structure
- b) To consider and approve terms of reference for committees
- c) To consider and approve membership to the council committees

15/25 MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

To consider councillor membership to outside bodies and annual subscriptions

16/25 INTERNAL CONTROLLER

To consider and approve new internal controller

17/25 POLICIES

To consider and approve policies and procedures:

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Financial regulations
- c) Code of Conduct
- d) Training and development Policy

18/25 AUDIT

- a) To consider and approve Section 1 of External Audit – Governance Statement
- b) To consider and approve Section 2 of External Audit – Financial Statement
- c) To consider Internal Auditor report and approve any actions required
- d) To consider and approve continued use of NCALC internal audit service

19/25 BOWLS CLUB LEASE

To consider queries raised by Bowls Club and approve response

20/25 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday 14th July 2025 at 7pm



Chairman – Mr F Smethers

Clerk – Mrs S Willis

www.harpole-pc.gov.uk

E-mail: clerk@harpole-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 10th March 2025, in the Old School Hall at 7pm.

Present – Cllrs F Smethers (Chair), N Bess, M Callaghan, J Gibbins, B Hancy, G Madle, S Philips,
D Starmer, C Wallace, C Wilkinson

Also present – S Willis (Clerk), WNC Cllr Brown (part) and 5 members of public

Meeting start: 7pm

329/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies received and accepted for Cllrs Roberts.

330/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Cllrs Starmer and Smethers as trustees of playing field.

331/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2 members of the public present from the Scarecrow festival committee to update council on the figures from 2024 and the plans for 2025. Overall 14 charities received a share of £27,000 from last years profits. In 2025 the festival will be slightly earlier (30 / 31 Aug) and will be centred around the playing field with route along main roads for scarecrows.

332/24 REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Brown was not yet present so it was agreed to move this to later in the meeting when he arrived.

333/24 COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of Parish council meeting 13th January 2025 were **APPROVED** and signed.

334/24 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Infrastructure Committee held on 27th January and 24th February and the Strategy, Finance and Policy Committee held 3rd February and 3rd March 2025 were received.

335/24 QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAIRMAN RELATING TO RECEIVED MINUTES

Planning, Highways and Infrastructure – A question was asked about the location of land that Harpole Charities had offered for new burial land. This was confirmed, clerk awaiting information regarding a survey to assess suitability.

Strategy, Finance and Policy – It was confirmed that as far as we are aware the Sandy Lane Relief Road is being constructed and is on target.

336/24 CLIMATE SUMMIT

Cllr Callaghan had attended the summit being run by Northampton Town Council. Parish Councils should raise the profile of Climate Change and be a source of information and education. The council should be looking to raise awareness, but a strategy on how and what is needed. To be added to PHI Committee agenda for further discussion.

Cllr Adam Brown joined the meeting during the above discussion.

337/24 REPORT FROM UNITARY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Brown gave West Northants Council update. Annual budget has been approved and council tax demands are on their way. WNC is aware of changes to the planning system that could impact what applications go to committee. Final government guidance is being awaited. SLRR is on target to complete in May. There have been some queries about the need for bus stops being closed and the length of A4500 closure which are being discussed. Several new policies have been adopted including the Transport Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Economic Growth Strategy.

Cllr Brown was asked about connectivity of the new developments to the village as new residents are walking on the road. He offered to come and take a look to see what help he can offer.

A question was asked about devolution. Currently WNC is part of a Midlands group, 2 of which did not want Northamptonshire to be part of a mayoral ward. MPs are involved to move this forward for future discussions.

Cllr Brown leaves.

274/24 PLAYING FIELDS

The Charity Commission had come back to our solicitors suggesting that the Council should take on the role of sole trustee of the playing fields charity rather than taking on the assets. Cllr Wallace had done a lot of research and believed that the council could still take the original route of the charity dissolving and passing assets, but there is a set process that needs to be followed. Meeting to be set up with PC and Playing Fields Association to discuss this process and how to move forward.

1 Member of the public leaves.

338/24 BOWLS CLUB LEASE

First draft of lease had been received. Council proposed that this is passed to the Bowls club for comment, giving them 28 days to reply.

339/24 INTERNAL CONTROLLER

With Cllr Hancy being added to the bank mandate, he is no longer able to be the internal controller. It was proposed that this is added to the May agenda for after the election, but Cllr Gibbins offered to be a temporary internal controller to sign off final quarter of 2024/25 before the audit.

340/24 ELECTIONS

Clerk advised that Parish Council elections take place on 1st May. Nominations open 17th March and closed 2nd April. Forms will need to be submitted in person at WNC offices at set times.

341/24 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

It was asked that 20mph zone and Christmas tree is kept on agendas.

Meeting closed 8.45pm
Signed

Date



Chairman – Mr F Smethers

Clerk – Mrs S Willis

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Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 31st March 2025, in the Old School Hall at 7.00pm.

Present – Cllrs K Gardner (chair), J Gibbins, G Madle, F Smethers

Also present – Clerk, 1 Member of public

Meeting Start: 7pm

342/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Cllrs Bess, Callaghan and Philips had sent apologies. Apologies were approved.

343/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

None

344/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Member of the public just to observe.

345/24 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of Planning, Highways & Infrastructure Committee Meeting held on 24th February 2025.

346/24 PLANNING

- a) 2025/0425/FULL – There were no objections to the planning application
- b) 2025/0424/FULL - There were no objections to the planning application

Cllr Gibbins joins the meeting

347/24 FLOODING

- a) Options of self inflating bags and prefilled sand bags were tabled. Storage is an issue. It was thought that a watertight storage box is needed near the office. It was agreed to order a box of 20 Floodcubes to get an idea of how they work and space needed for storage to enable investigation of box needed.
- b) There has not been another meeting since the last committee meeting. It is known that residents in the village that have been flooded are taking their own precautions. Methodist chapel is also installing new doors to help prevent flooding.

348/24 STREET LIGHTING

Cllr Smethers still needs to speak to the homeowner. It is not clear whose property the land is, just that it is not Highways.

The leaning light in School Lane is currently with Argos insurance company.

There was a general discussion about how the LED lights seem to be working well and very few have needed to be replaced. Some are on all day which may just need cleaning. WNC highways have been doing an assessment of trees in the village and we will get a report when completed. (there are some obscuring lights on Larkhall Lane)



Councillor advised that visitors this weekend thought the village was dark and needed to use torch on phones to feel safe walking after dark. Councillors to look at Carrs Way / Northampton Road and feed back.

349/24 HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

- a) Clerk is awaiting feedback from other clerks about survey to the village. It was felt it is important to involve the public. The speed monitor will be moved to a different location soon.
- b) Cllr Adam Brown had offered to meet with council regarding footpaths (or lack of) in the parish, particularly between the village and new estates. Meeting scheduled for next week. Main area of concern Larkhall Lane / Sandy Lane where residents are walking to primary school. There are also children walking from village up to Duston School. Also mentioned was poor footpaths in village and lack of kerbs in some areas due to high road resurfacing. Main issue is public safety and lack of green infrastructure to link residents to amenities.
- c) It was agreed that the quote of £2,326.47 for the 3 gateways was to be accepted if this included installation (wording of quote was not clear).
- d) Handyman had suggested gravel on corners of Green on Garners Way. Council felt grass crete that would allow grass to still grow through would be better. Clerk to investigate pricing.

Council had been promised pedestrian crossing signs on A4500 by end of financial year but this has not happened. Clerk to continue chasing.

Looks like drains were cleaned in South View last week.

Litterpick at weekend was a success. It was thought a plan should be put in place for next and to try to encourage school to get involved. To be added to June agenda.

Cllr Gibbins was thanked for his hard work on the day.

350/24 ALLOTMENTS

- a) Clerk asked for posts and markers for plots to help when showing new people around. Due to history this is not always easy. Allotment association will take a look. It was suggested that rather than posts we could lay painted slabs.
- b) Clerk advised of plot holders that have been helping clear untended plots. The work they have done has lead to plots being taken. It was suggested that a discount could be offered, however, anyone helping out may expect the same. To be added to agenda later in year to discuss a way of giving appreciation.
- c) When taking rents the parish council also take allotment association fees. These have risen this year but the council was not aware so did not pass this onto the plothead. It was agreed the council would cover the shortfall this year.
- d) Over the weekend it has been reported that there have been logs and chippings delivered to sites and an untended plot. Council agreed to leave a couple of weeks to see what happens.

Grass cutting contractor has visited twice and all seems well with the work.

351/24 STREET FURNITURE

- a) Clerk has contacted companies for quotes. Cllr Madle to guesstimate the height of current flagpole.



- b) Playing Fields association want to update noticeboard on pavilion and asked PC for input as PC taking on. Clerk to send link of provider of noticeboards in village but size and type can be decided by playing fields.
- c) Clerk to investigate new bench prices.

352/24 CHURCH

- a) Access is needed to the site by a surveyor, either neighbour or farmer from field behind. Due to lambing season this can be delayed.
- b) Clerk to investigate prices for cleaning of war memorial.
- c) Church has asked if the Council can look into replacing retaining wall in the churchyard. Clerk to ask church to get quotes for council to consider if they wish to contribute.
- d) Church have also asked for help in resurfacing footpath. As above, clerk to ask for quotes.

353/24 CLIMATE CHANGE

Whilst it is not within our remit to tell others what to do with regards to climate change we can give pointers to information – A green tip in each newsletter? A policy or pledge is needed as to how the council will act when making decisions such as suppliers credentials, adding EV points or green energy to new buildings. Clerk to investigate.

354/24 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Cllr Wilkinson advised he will not be standing for election. Cllr Smethers as chair of council thanked him for his many years of service.

Meeting closed 9pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 28th April at 7pm

Signed



Chairman – Mr F Smethers

Clerk – Mrs S Willis

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Minutes of the Strategy, Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 7th April 2025, in the Old School Hall at 7.00pm.

Present – Cllrs F Smethers (Chair), N Bess, S Roberts, D Starmer, C Wallace

Also present – S Willis (Clerk), Cllr M Callaghan, Paul Thomas (Clerk to Harlestone PC and Harlestone Manor PC), 1 Member of the public

Meeting Start: 7pm

355/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Hancy, Gardner and Gibbins.

356/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Cllrs Smethers and Starmer declared an interest as trustees of the playing field.

357/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Member of the public attended to ask the council if they could cut back brambles in the allotments that are coming over the fence into his garden. Clerk to obtain quotes and add to Planning, Highways and Infrastructure Committee meeting.

358/24 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of the Strategy, Finance and Policy Committee of 3rd March 2025.

359/24 NORTHAMPTON WEST SUSTAINABLE EXTENSION

- a) Planning application 2025/1210/MAR was considered. This is for access roads to the school site. There was a query about parking requirements but it was thought this would become clear when planning application for the school will submitted. It was proposed that there were no objections but the council would like to know more information about planned timescales for the school.
- b) Another meeting to be set up with Bloors early June. Clerk to chase for proposed timescales for land transfer. The commercial centre is the responsibility of the legal owners to promote. Council are not aware of any promotion as yet.

360/24 NORWOOD FARM SUSTAINABLE EXTENSION

- a) Planning application 2024/5662/S73 was considered. This is a request to change a condition on the S106 due to works having been superseded by Smart Motorway works. It was agreed that the council noted this request
- b) Residents along Sandy Lane have commented to the parish council that there is an occasional sewage smell coming from the site. Clerk has notified Vistry. It appears that times and potency is inconsistent. Clerk to follow up.
There was a discussion that new residents on both sites are being charged a management fee, even though the management of the land will be passed to the parish

council. It was agreed that the clerk write to both developers asking them to clarify the situation and to reconfirm our intentions.

There has also been some pile driving on Vistry site, and although residents were notified this time there has still been some damage.

361/24 DEVELOPMENT RELATED ROADWORKS

- a) Cllr Brown confirmed that works to the Sandy Lane Relief Road are on schedule.
- b) Clerk had queried S106 commitments of the Panattoni development. A contribution for works to the Kislingbury roundabout was received by WNC in 2020 and they have 10 years to complete the works. With regards to commitments to footpaths / Cyclepaths. WNC believe the works have been completed. The report shows works to be completed “locally” which has been read as local to the site and access, not along A4500 to Upton as suggested elsewhere in the document.
- c) North West Relief Road is due to be opened in June 2025.

Paul Thomas leaves the meeting

362/24 SPORTS PROVISION

- a) Vistry will be building the pavilion and associated works. At present they are working on technical plans and costings. Clerk and chair met with them and another meeting is scheduled. It is agreed that there will be regular meetings throughout the process to keep the council up to date and to allow us to make any necessary decisions.
- b) Cllr Claude Wallace was delegated authority to speak to third parties (such as, but not limited to, the Charity Commission) to further investigate the best way to transfer the playing fields to the parish council.
- c) It was noted that a current valuation of the playing fields is needed. Clerk to find surveyor to complete the works.
- d) It was noted that parking for football is still bad, despite the extra car parking spaces on site. This is to be discussed at next PHI committee.

363/24 CIL

List was reviewed. Updates to projects needs to be updated.

364/24 WEST NORTHANTS CONSULTATION

WNC are consulting on a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to car cruising to cover the whole of the West Northants area. Council were in support of the proposals.

365/24 PAYMENTS

- a) Scaffolding was needed for the clock renovation and the church had asked to share the scaffold for works to the church roof. Church have paid the invoice and are asking for the council to pay. It was agreed that the council would pay half of the invoice.

b)

| Payee | Amount | VAT | Power used |
|--------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Paul Thomas | 389.50 | 0 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Unity Bank | 7.40 | 0 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| NCALC | 90.00 | 15.00 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Westcotec | 18.00 | 3.00 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Raybell | 547.20 | 91.20 | Small Holdings and Allotments Act |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------------|
| | | | 1908 s23 |
| Shield Maintenance | 91.00 | 15.17 | Litter Act 1983 s5 |
| Autella Payroll Services | 156.24 | 26.04 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| NCALC | 60.00 | 10.00 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| British Gas | 87.45 | 4.16 | LGA 1972 S33 |
| Viking | 23.06 | 3.84 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Tomato | 14.76 | 0.70 | Highways Act 1980 s3 |
| Microsoft | 669.60 | 111.60 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Microsoft | 138.24 | 23.04 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Shield Maintenance | 91.00 | 15.17 | Litter Act 1983 s5 |
| R&G Maintenance | 1,152.00 | 192.00 | Highways Act 1980 S96 |
| ID Mobile | 6.00 | 1.00 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| WW Spokes & Son | 300.00 | 50.00 | Highways Act 1980 S96 |
| Old School Hall | 80.00 | 0 | LGA 1972 S111 |
| Scribe | 118.80 | 19.80 | LGA 1972 S111 |

Income

| Payer | Amount |
|-----------|----------|
| CCLA | 3,409.21 |
| Metrobank | 1.32 |

Payments approved.

366/24 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a)

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Current Account | 170,696.97 |
| CCLA Savings | 857,703.62 |
| Metrobank savers | 2,033.63 |
| Old Bank | -1.01 |
| Outstanding payments | 0 |
| Total | 1,030,433.21 |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Opening Balance | 663,090.19 |
| Expenditure to date | 260,237.12 |
| Income to Date | 627,580.13 |
| | |
| Cashbook balance | 1,030,433.21 |

367/24 CONTRACTS

Quotations had been received for new electricity contract for the parish office. The current contract expires in July. It was proposed to go with the cheaper quote of Tomato energy. The switch will happen in July when the current contract expires.

368/24 COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter deadline is this week for delivery by end of the month.

Noticeboards to be installed in new developments. Approval has been given but location needs to be agreed.

Walkie Talkies may be a good idea for the emergency plan team in case of an emergency.

Councillors to find the location of the ones used for scarecrow festival and if these could be used if needed.

369/24 MAY MEETING

Due to the timing of the elections SFP usual meeting time cannot be used. It was agreed that there would be no SFP meeting in May.

370/24 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Potential job description for additional staff member.

Meeting closed 8.55pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 2nd June at 7pm

Signed

Date



Chairman – Mr F Smethers

Clerk – Mrs S Willis

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Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 28th April 2025, in the Old School Hall at 7.00pm.

Present – Cllrs J Gibbins (chair), N Bess, M Callaghan, S Philips, F Smethers (part), C Wilkinson

Also present – Clerk, Cllr D Starmer (part)

Meeting Start: 7pm

As chair and vice chair were not present, councillors voted for Cllr Gibbins to chair this meeting.

372/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Cllrs Gardner and Madle had sent apologies. Apologies were approved.
Cllrs Wilkinson and Smethers had advised they would be late

373/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Cllr Gibbins as an allotment plotholder

374/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of public present.

375/24 MINUTES

Councillors **APPROVED** the minutes of Planning, Highways & Infrastructure Committee Meeting held on 31st March 2025.

Cllr Wilkinson joined the meeting

376/24 PLANNING

Committee considered amendments to planning application 2024/5633/MAR - Approval of Reserved Matters (RM), appearance means of access, landscaping, layout and scale for Phase 2 and part of Phase 1B. Amendments were noted. There was also a comment that the committee thought that adding chimneys to new builds with no fireplace was not necessary.

377/24 EMERGENCY PLANNING

Kislingbury Flood Warden has met with Environment Agency regarding flooding at the river. There are 2 outlet pipes from Harpole Side that need repairing. Clerk to investigate whose responsibility this would be.

Cllrs Smethers and Starmer join the meeting.

A drain on the playing fields that overflows was also mentioned. Playing fields are aware.

2 members of the working party met to start pulling together a plan. It is thought that equipment is needed first. Flood cubes have been ordered and arrived today. There was



a discussion about potentially needing a generator and walkie talkies. Another meeting is needed. Clerk to contact WNC Emergency plan officer to see if she is available to meet and help direct.

378/24 STREET LIGHTING

There is a pole on A4500 that was knocked in a traffic accident. This is still laying on the ground with tape despite happening months ago. Clerk to chase.
Clerk to chase insurance company regarding light on School Lane.
Councillors to look at dark spot on Northampton Road to see if and where a light is needed.

379/24 HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

- a) There was a discussion about the need for a 20mph zone in the village. It was agreed that a consultation is needed and could be based on a walkability checklist. A survey could go out with the next newsletter. It was agreed that Cllr Callaghan could contact the school to discuss their concerns.
- b) Despite the extended car park at the sports club there are still times when there is inconsiderate parking on Larkhall Lane. If measures are put in place, who would enforce? We would need to be careful that we don't push the problem to other streets nearby. Clerk to contact WNC and police to seek clarification on who has what powers and what powers the PC could use.
- c) Councillors and clerk had met with WNC Cllr Adam Brown and discussed concerns about residents walking between Western Gate estate and village. There was no commitment for any works but will ask for a desk top study to see if culverting and footpath is possible on Larkhall Lane. If desktop suggests it is then an onsite study to understand feasibility and costings involved. There is no timeframe for this, but it was thought that this should be chased after the elections.
Concerns about Davidson development and connectivity to the village was also discussed.
- d) There has been a proposal from WNC to extend the 7.5t weight limit which will cover part of Norwood development, Sandy Lane and South View which has been welcomed by council.
Clerk to ask if barriers on Upper High Street are still needed.

380/24 ALLOTMENTS

Clerk has been advised that gate by school is catching. The company that installed has been called and they will come out to brace later this week.
Clerk has met with the grass cutting company to discuss an area that had been missed on the last cut.

381/24 STREET FURNITURE

- a) 1 quote received for new flagpole. Clerk to ask a couple of questions regarding installation and await other quote for next meeting. Clerk to draft flag flying policy.
- b) If playing Field want to buy new Parish Council notice board they have council permission.
- c) Refurbishment of benches on hold until council have decided what they would like to do. Clerk in process of ordering bins.



Grass cutting on Upper High Street opposite the Strawberry Farm has been missed. As has a verge on Manor Close opposite the nursery. Clerk to contact contractor.

382/24 CHURCH

- a) No updates on burial ground.
- b) Clerk had requested 3 quotes for cleaning war memorial but only received one. Clerk to chase and bring to next meeting.
- c) Committee agreed that the security costs would not have been needed if the scaffolding had only reached the clock and therefore the council would only want to pay for half of the scaffolding costs as originally agreed.

383/24 CHRISTMAS TREE

Clerk and councillor were meant to meet with Welford Christmas Tree Farm last week but the meeting did not take place and has been rescheduled for this week.

384/24 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

No further items to add

Meeting closed 8.55pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 27th May at 7pm

Signed

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

| Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements | | Yes | No |
|--|--|-----|----|
| All sections | Have all highlighted boxes have been completed? | | |
| | Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor? | | |
| Internal Audit Report | Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided? | | |
| Section 1 | For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published? | | |
| Section 2 | Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval? | | |
| | Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting? | | |
| | Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required? | | |
| | Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8? | | |
| | Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided? | | |
| Sections 1 and 2 | Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested. | | |

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

| Internal control objective | Yes | No* | Not covered** |
|--|-----|-----|----------------|
| A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year. | | | |
| B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for. | | | |
| C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these. | | | |
| D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate. | | | |
| E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for. | | | |
| F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for. | | | |
| G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied. | | | |
| H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. | | | |
| I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year. | | | |
| J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded. | | | |
| K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i> | | | |
| L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation. | | | |
| M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i> | | | |
| N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i> | | | |
| O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee. | Yes | No | Not applicable |

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

| | Agreed | | 'Yes' means that this authority: |
|---|--------|-----|--|
| | Yes | No* | |
| 1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. | | | <i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i> |
| 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. | | | <i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i> |
| 3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. | | | <i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i> |
| 4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. | | | <i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i> |
| 5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required. | | | <i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i> |
| 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems. | | | <i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i> |
| 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit. | | | <i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i> |
| 8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements. | | | <i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i> |
| 9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit. | Yes | No | N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i> |

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

| | Year ending | | Notes and guidance |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| | 31 March 2024 £ | 31 March 2025 £ | |
| | | | <i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i> |
| 1. Balances brought forward | | | <i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i> |
| 2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies | | | <i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i> |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts | | | <i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i> |
| 4. (-) Staff costs | | | <i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i> |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments | | | <i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i> |
| 6. (-) All other payments | | | <i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i> |
| 7. (=) Balances carried forward | | | <i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i> |
| 8. Total value of cash and short term investments | | | <i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i> |
| 9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets | | | <i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i> |
| 10. Total borrowings | | | <i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i> |

| For Local Councils Only | Yes | No | N/A | |
|---|-----|----|-----|--|
| 11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) | | | | <i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i> |
| 11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) | | | | <i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i> |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YYYY

Training and Development Policy

Introduction

Harpole Parish Council is committed to ensuring that its Clerk and Councillors are provided with the training they require to ensure they can carry out their duties to the best of their abilities, and are up to date with all current legislation. The Council recognises that the most important resource is its staff and Councillors and is committed to encouraging the enhancement of their knowledge and qualifications through appropriate training and development.

A training budget is allocated to enable attendance at any relevant training and conferences throughout the year.

Policy Statement

The Clerk is responsible for either procuring or, occasionally providing, the necessary training to ensure that everybody is suitably equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their duties to the Parish and residents.

Membership of County Association and SLCC

The Council will retain membership of Northants CALC and SLCC in order that all training opportunities can be accessed.

Training and Development Activity

All Councillors will be:

- issued with a link to copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and any other information which is deemed relevant;
- given an electronic copy of the *Good Councillor Guides*;
- emailed all updates and newsletters which the Clerk receives and deems relevant;
- encouraged to attend Northants CALC's Off to a Flying Start training course;
- encouraged to complete courses and reading required for foundation level of NCALC councillor development framework
- circulated any other training course details which may enhance their position.

The Chair and Vice Chair are also encouraged to attend the NCALC Chairmanship course upon their election and acceptance to office.

The Clerk / RFO will be:

- provided with a contract of employment setting out clear objectives and expectations;
- receive an employment and salary review annually from the Council;
- encouraged to attend all relevant NCALC and SLCC clerks' training courses;
- encouraged to gain ILCA (Introduction to Local Council Administration) (Level 2), and
- encouraged to gain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) (Level 3);
- undertake any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as IT, legal powers, finance and planning which is identified through regular training needs assessments;
- encouraged to attend relevant local meetings such as Clerk's forums and briefings;
- able to subscribe to relevant publications and advice services including the SLCC and NALC;
- provided with all relevant publications such as the *Local Council Administration* reference book and the *SLCC Clerks' Manual*;
- given regular feedback from the Council on their performance;
- entitled to paid study leave in order to work towards the qualifications.

Training Needs Identification

Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chair and Clerk. Opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the full council.

Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for new Clerks, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions, annual staff appraisal and changes in legislation.

The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required.

Resourcing Training

A review will be undertaken annually during the budget process to ascertain any weaknesses or potential areas of improvement that the Parish Council could enhance through training.

Budgets will be put in place and agreed to cover training courses, annual subscriptions and purchasing of relevant publications.

Evaluation and Review of Training

The Clerk will maintain an updated training record for all Councillors and the Clerk.

Following attending any training the person who attended will report back to the Council on the relevance and effectiveness of the training supplied.



Adopted at a Parish Council Meeting on 3rd February 2025. To be reviewed in two years, or sooner should legislation dictate.



HARPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

Version 3 May 2025

Version Control

| Version | Date reviewed | Changes made |
|-----------|---------------|---|
| Version 1 | March 2019 | Replacement of 'chairman' with 'Chair'. Adaptation to bring standing orders in line with Harpole Parish Council |
| | May 2020 | Updating and correction |
| Version 3 | May 2021 | Re- adoption by new council |
| | May 2024 | Reviewed and adopted |
| | May 2025 | Reviewed and adopted by new council |
| | | |

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INTRODUCTION

These standing orders outline how Harpole Parish Council will conduct its business. Their design is based on the National Association of Local Council (NALC) model standing orders 2018.

HOW TO USE MODEL STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council and are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. Harpole Parish Council standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The standing orders do not include financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. Harpole's Financial regulations are available on the Parish website.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a. Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b. A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c. An agenda motion that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d. If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may only be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e. An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f. If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h. A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i. If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j. Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k. One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l. A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m. The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n. Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o. Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if motion amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p. During the debate on a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has

been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.

- q. A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting, his decision shall be final.
- r. When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard (I.e comments not captured) or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s. Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- t. Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b. If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c. If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

The following key outlines the conditions that apply to a particular

meeting type: Full Council meetings ●

Committee meetings ●

Sub-committee meetings ●

- a. **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b. **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c. **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d. **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for**
 - **other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g. Subject to standing order 3(f), members of public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h. In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i. Persons must raise a hand to request to speak during a meeting. They must await permission from the chair and must not talk over others.
- j. A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct comments to the chair.
- k. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair shall direct the order of speaking.
- l. **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to**
 - **film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other**
means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

- m. **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
-
- n. **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
-
- o. **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- p. **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q. **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
-
- r. **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he/ she gave an original vote.**
- *See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.*
- s. **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t. The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- the resolutions made.
- u. **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in**
- **a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or**

restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter



- v. **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- w. **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.



- x. A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b. **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d. The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. if the ordinary members of a committee confirm to the Proper Officer 5 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend, the council may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members.
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee; shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
 - vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
 - viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend meetings of a sub-committee the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the

meetings.

- x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xi. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

- a. **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b. **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d. **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e. **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f. **The Chair of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g. **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h. **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i. **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j. Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;

- iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
- v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
- ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
- xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
- xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
- xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

(OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES)

- a. **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b. **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c. The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.

- d. If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub- committee.
- b. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a. Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the chair's casting vote.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in its wording.
- d. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, motion shall be rejected until mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it is understood, in writing, to Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before meeting.
- e. If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f. The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g. Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received, subject to the necessity to have closed sessions when the chair of the meeting can determine the order motions are presented.
- h. Motions rejected will be recorded with an explanation by Proper Officer of reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

- a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
 - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

see also standing order 20.

- a. **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b. **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c. **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

- d. **Councillors, staff, the Council’s contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

- Full Council meetings ●
- Committee meetings ●
- Sub-committee meetings ●

- a. If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b. There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
- c. The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d. If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting they relate to, he/she shall sign them and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but this view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

- e. **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
-
- f. Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS.

See also standing order 3(u).

- a. All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b. Unless dispensation has been granted, councillors or non-councillors, with voting rights, shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return after the matter has been considered.
- c. Unless dispensation has been granted, councillors or non-councillors with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest, if so required by the Council’s code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after the matter has been considered.
- d. **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer as**

soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

- e. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- f. A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g. Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required].
- h. **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
 - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a. Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.
- b. Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d).
- c. The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d. **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a. The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b. The Proper Officer shall:

- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda, including all relevant documents pertaining to the meeting (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 5 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests and publish these on the website;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation, Council's Data Retention Policy and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to
be executed; (*see also*

standing order 23);

- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt Authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in his/her the absence Vice- Chair (if there is one) of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council or Planning committee;
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a. The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a. "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a document containing statements to summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported andwhich includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a document containing statements summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14

days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

- vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.**
- g. **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council or any committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman if he is not available, the vice-chairman at its next meeting.
- c. The chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk or the Executive Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by Council
- d. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chairman or in his absence, the vice-chairman in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of Council.
- e. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the member of staff relates to the chairman or vice-chairman, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [he (Council).
- f. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g. In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION -See also standing order 21.

- a. In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.
- b. The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list). *See also standing order 11.*

- a. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b. The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.
- c. The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.
- d. The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.
- e. The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.
- f. The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a. Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing order 13(b) (xii).

- a. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.

[Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.]

24. DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a. An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council.
- b. Unless Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District/County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a. All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b. A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d. The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Terms of Reference for Committees and their Powers to Act

1. Powers of the Parish Council

The following matters are Council decisions and discussions of these matters by Committees must be submitted to the Council as recommendations:

- 1.1 The determination of the Council's Precept.
- 1.2 The purchase, sale or leasing of assets.
- 1.3 Major variations of any policy decision previously taken by the Council and the declaration of any new policy provided that the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate committee.
- 1.4 The dismissal of the Parish Clerk.
- 1.5 The incurring of expenditure for which no provision or insufficient provision has been made.
- 1.6 Changes to Standing Orders relating to the proceedings of the Council, to the Terms of Reference of Committees, and to Financial Regulations as recommended by the Strategy Change & Engagement Committee.
- 1.7 Health and Safety requirements incumbent upon the Council
- 1.8 The Council has the authority to approve any increases in salary or rates of pay beyond the recommendations of the various advisory bodies.

Matters to be Dealt with by the Council

The following matters will be dealt with by the Council without being first considered by a Committee.

- 1.9 To authorise the signing of documents (leases, license, contracts etc.)
- 1.10 To appoint the Clerk.
- 1.11 To receive the reports of the Internal and External Auditors and to refer them to the Finance Committee for action as required.

2. Conditions and Provisions Relating to Delegation

- 2.1 All delegated powers and duties shall be exercised and performed on behalf of and in the name of the Council.
- 2.2 All signed Committee minutes shall be received at the next meeting of the Full Council.
- 2.3 Where the Clerk chooses not to exercise their delegated powers the appropriate Committee

to whom such decision would have been reported for information shall have the power to make a decision on their behalf.

- 2.4** Each Committee has the power to determine all matters within their terms of reference.
- 2.5** Where a Committee considers appointing a Councillor, his/her firm or partnership or a family member to do work for the Council then the final decision shall rest with the Full Council.
- 2.6** Each committee, at its first meeting of the Council year, shall elect from its members a Chair and Vice Chair for that year.

3. Strategy, Finance & Policy Committee

3.1 Membership shall be 7 Councillors.

3.2 Meetings must have 3 Members to be quorate.

3.3 Terms of Reference - Strategy

3.3.1 To advise the Council on all matters relating to strategy and business planning.

3.3.2 To develop and review the Council's Business Plan

3.3.3 To advise the Council on all aspects of the S106 Developer Contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments, Heads of Terms and any other legal agreements drawn up between the Developers, Harpole Parish Council and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).

- the financial implications of the agreements.
- the total commuted sums.
- community buildings included/ proposed
- formal parks and woodland or county parks to be transferred/adopted

3.3.4 To make observations/comments on planning policies, Joint Core Strategy and detailed local plans appropriate to the parish

3.3.5 To monitor large scale planning applications/requests from developers and report to the Parish Council

3.3.5 To be responsible for maintaining the Harpole Neighbourhood Plan

3.4.3 To be responsible for appropriate communications and engagement with residents to inform and publicise the work of the Parish Council

3.4 Terms of Reference - Finance

3.4.1 To consider the broad social and economic needs of the parish and matters of importance to the area.

3.4.2 To advise the Council as to its financial and economic policies.

3.4.3 To prepare the annual budget, based on submissions from committees and to formulate the precept proposal for approval by the Parish Council.

3.4.4 To maintain adequate general reserves, in line with audit regulations, and allocate Earmarked reserves for specific purposes as agreed by the Council.

3.4.5 To monitor the 'spend against budget' and receive bank reconciliations on a quarterly basis.

3.4.6 To approve the monthly payments list and any direct debit arrangements.

3.4.7 To be responsible for allocating and controlling the manpower, property, finances and other resources of the Council.

3.4.8 To provide and maintain any administrative buildings which are not the specific responsibility of another Committee.

3.4.9 To prepare an action plan in response to the reports of the Internal and External Auditors.

3.4.10 To authorise attendance at conferences and other powers contained in Section 175 of the Local Government act 1972

3.4.11 To be responsible for the following matters:

- Administrative services of the Council

- The co-ordination of the resources of the Council
- 3.4.12** To be responsible for the Council's financial support of community projects and to monitor their progress.
- 3.4.13** To be responsible for the administration of the Council's grant giving procedure.
- 3.4.14** To authorise payments, which are required to be made under the terms of any contracts and to receive reports from other committees in relation to the monitoring of contract performance.
- 3.4.15** To manage the tendering process for any works or contracts which the Council wishes to enter into.
- 3.4.16** To receive recommendations from Committees, where there are financial implications for the Council and, if approved, recommend them to Full Council.
- 3.4.17** To recommend to the Council authorisation for the appropriation, acquisition and disposal, whether by purchase, sale, lease, licence or grant, of land and interests in the rights concerning land under the ownership and management of the Council. The final sanction for any such decision/recommendation shall always remain with the Parish Council.

3.5 Terms of Reference - Policy

- 3.5.1** To review the overall effectiveness of the Council's work and the standards and level of service provided. To identify the need for new services and to keep under review the necessity for existing ones
- 3.5.2** To review annually all Standing Orders of the Council and Terms of Reference of Committees and make appropriate recommendations to the Council.
- 3.5.3** To review the policies of the Council and make recommendations for additional policies as required.

3.6 Matters Delegated to the Clerk

- 3.6.1** In consultation with the Chairman (or the Chairman of the appropriate Committee).
- To authorise necessary action where urgent decisions are required in connection with legal proceedings.
 - To exercise all the powers of the Council in an emergency and report to the next meeting of the Committee.
 - To accept tenders within the financial estimates for the project and in accordance with the procedures laid down in Standing Orders.
 - To acquire and dispose of equipment and machinery on the most reasonable terms possible in accordance with an agreed programme.
 - To write-off bad debts under £50.

4. Planning Highways & Infrastructure Committee

- 4.1** Membership shall be 7 Members of the Council.
- 4.2** Meetings must have 3 Members to be quorate.

4.3 Terms of Reference – Planning

- 4.3.1** To make observations/comments on all routine planning applications.
- 4.3.2** To make observations/comments on planning appeals and related matters.
- 4.3.3** To make observations/comments on tree preservation orders and listed building consents.

4.4 Matters to be delegated to the Clerk

Comments to the Planning Authority are required within 21 days of the Council receiving the planning applications and it may therefore be necessary for the Clerk, in conjunction with the Committee Chairman, to submit comments and report to the next meeting.

4.5 Terms of Reference – Highways

- 4.5.1** To deal with all matters relating to the creation, diversion and closure of public footpaths.
- 4.5.2** To comment on Traffic Orders.
- 4.5.3** To make recommendations to the Unitary Council with respect to Street Naming.
- 4.5.4** To make recommendations to the Unitary Council on Traffic Management matters.
- 4.5.5** To process complaints regarding traffic signs, road and footway surfaces and poor reinstatement etc. with the appropriate authorities
- 4.5.6** To make observations/comments on all matters in relation to public transport.

4.6 Terms of reference – Infrastructure

- 4.6.1** To manage and control parks, recreation ground, public walks and public open spaces, including trees, in the ownership of Harpole Parish Council.
- 4.6.2** To control allotments through the Allotments Advisory Group and receive its reports
- 4.6.3** To manage and control the following:
 - Street Lighting – Footway Lighting.
 - Trees on land owned or managed by the Parish Council
 - Street Furniture –litter bins, dog bins, seats and benches owned by HPC, Bus Shelters.
 - Grass cutting of all Council owned and managed open spaces
 - Grass cutting verges on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council.
- 4.6.4** To monitor contracts, relevant to the responsibilities of this committee, to ensure that the performance meets the agreed specification.
- 4.6.5** Property Holdings - To effectively manage and maintain the property of the Council.
- 4.6.6** To enter into tenancy agreements and to license grazing and mowing rights in respect of land holdings etc.

- 4.6.7 To receive reports into matters relating to the Churchyard and to authorise any appropriate action.
- 4.6.8 To be responsible for the Parish Council's role in relation to community events (Best Kept Village, litter picking, Scarecrow Festival etc.)
- 4.6.9 To deal with matters relating to flooding issues within the parish

4.7 Matters Delegated to the Clerk

- 4.7.5 To authorise minor repair work on equipment and/or street furniture within Financial Regulations.

4.8 Allotments Advisory Group

- 4.8.5 The Group shall be made up of 3 Councillors and two representatives of the Allotment Association (Members of the group may not represent both bodies)
- 4.8.6 Meetings must have two Councillors present to be quorate
- 4.8.7 Meetings will take place quarterly to consider issues raised by allotment tenants
- 4.8.8 The group may make recommendations to the Committee regarding any improvement works to be considered.

5 Staffing Committee

- 5.6 Membership shall comprise the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and three other councillors.

- 5.7 Meetings must have 3 Members to be quorate.

5.8 Terms of Reference

- 5.8.5 To deal with all matters relating to recruitment and appointment and terms and conditions of employment for all staff.
- 5.8.6 To make recommendations to the Council regarding policy for the remuneration, employment, welfare, pensions, qualification and other conditions of service of all employees.
- 5.8.7 To determine and monitor appointment procedures
- 5.8.8 To establish and regularly review personnel policies and procedures including staff appraisal.
- 5.8.9 To annually review staffing levels and make recommendations to the Parish Council.
- 5.8.10 The appointment and dismissal of members of staff other than the Parish Clerk.
- 5.8.11 To manage the Annual appraisal process including objective setting and monitoring for all staff.
- 5.8.12 To review and agree a matrix system showing which Members of the Parish Council would be able to sit on panels related to the Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure should the need arise.
- 5.8.13 To convene an Appeals Committee if and when required.
- 5.8.14 To authorise the attendance of officers at conferences or courses including the incurring of necessary expenditure
- 5.8.15 To monitor training and development needs of staff and Councillors.

- 5.8.16** To ensure that all Members of the Council are aware of and understand their responsibilities in staffing matters.

6 Working Parties

A Working Party must follow the course for which it was convened and there is to be no transfer of delegated powers from the Committee from which it was formed otherwise the Council acts unlawfully. (LGA 1972 s.101).

- 9.1** The Working Party shall not issue instructions to any officer if, in the opinion of the officer, it is likely to incur expenses or use excessive time without prior authority of the Committee
- 9.2** Membership of a Working Party is to be decided at the creation of the group when the need is identified for such an action.
- 9.3** Membership need not be confined to Members of the Council, nor to the parent committee, members may be drawn from volunteers or specialist areas.
- 9.4** Meetings must have 3 Members to be quorate.

9.5 Terms of Reference

- 9.5.1 to be convened to suit the purpose of the parent Committee for the specific task of undertaking a project or detailed study as defined by that Committee.
- 9.5.2 The Chairman of a Working Party will be appointed by the members of the Working Party at its first meeting
- 9.5.3 The Working Party shall be convened by the Town Clerk or the officer acting as secretary and minutes recorded of that meeting.
- 9.5.4 The minutes of the Working Party shall be received, as required, by Council or Committee at its next meeting following the meeting of the Working Party.
- 9.5.5 The Working Party shall advise and make recommendations to the Council or Committee from which it was formed.
- 9.5.6 The Working Party may meet without the need to give public notice.

If urgent expenditure is necessary then this can only be sanctioned through the emergency powers of the Parish Clerk.

(Financial Regulation 4.5 The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500.00. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter).

Financial Regulations

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on 13th May 2024.

Reviewed and readopted by new council May 2025.

1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
 - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**
 - **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
 - **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
 - **approving accounting statements;**

- **approving an annual governance statement;**
 - **borrowing;**
 - **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
 - **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**
- 1.7. In addition, the council shall:
- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
 - authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.2. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
 - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
 - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
 - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
 - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
 - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Finance Committee.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures

in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council

- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions;
or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in November for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.
- 4.3. No later than December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the finance committee not later than the end of November each year.

- 4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals and forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the finance committee and a recommendation made to the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and forecast, the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate committee, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT
 - in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
 - the council for all items over £5,000;

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO.

- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the council or duly delegated committee unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or a duly delegated committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council or Finance Committee for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:
 - i. any payments of up to £500 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
 - ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the council, where the Clerk certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or finance committee.
 - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or finance committee.
- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the finance committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall 4 councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to all authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next finance meeting and appended to the minutes.
- 7.8. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.9. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.10. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by two of the Clerk and a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.12. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

- 7.13. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members who are authorised signatories.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Finance Committee at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and any balance shall be paid in full each month. The credit card is only to be used for online orders where an invoice is not available.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk or RFO (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by the finance committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software. Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made quarterly where the claim exceeds £100 and at least annually at the end of the financial year.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 13.8. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not

exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. [Charities]

- 18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.]

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension

are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

GENERAL POWERS OF COMPETENCE

The General Power of Competence in sections 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011 is available only to 'eligible' parish councils in England. The eligibility criteria are set out in The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 (S.I. 2012 No. 965). They are that the parish council has resolved at a meeting of the council that it meets the following conditions at the time the resolution is passed:

- Two thirds or more of the councillors have been elected, rather than co-opted or appointed
- the clerk to the local council holds the:
 - Certificate in Local Council Administration, Or
 - Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy and governance Certificate of Higher Education in Local Council Administration
 - The first level of the foundation degree in Community Engagement
- The clerk has completed the relevant training (for example training in the exercise of the general power provided in accordance with the national training strategy for parish councils adopted by NALC, as revised from time to time), unless such training was required for the purpose of obtaining one of the qualifications listed above

Eligibility is reviewed each subsequent relevant annual meeting (for example an annual meeting taking place in a year of ordinary elections of parish councillors)

On the face of it, the General Power of Competence is the power of a local council to do anything that individuals generally may do (Localism Act 2011, s.1), as long as they don't break other laws. An individual means an adult with full capacity. The power includes the power to do an act anywhere in the United Kingdom or elsewhere; and the power to do it for a commercial purpose or otherwise for a charge, or without charge; and the power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

But there are boundaries to the General Power and limits on doing things for a commercial purpose.

- Cannot be used to over-ride or circumvent existing specific powers or legal restrictions.
- Cannot be used to raise additional taxes
- Does not negate existing duties or legislation (employment law, health and safety, Freedom of information etc)
- Generally if it is a statutory obligation of another authority it should be left to them to fulfil.

Where an activity is done for a commercial purpose, it must be done through a limited company.

Following the election Harpole Parish Council have 12 of 13 councillors elected. I hold the CiLCA qualification and took the extra module on this. As such you qualify to use this power. Moving forward it makes it easier to make decisions as I do not have to look for a power to see if it is something a parish council can do. You just need to make sure that it would be deemed reasonable to do, and is not going against another power or restriction.