

General Policies & Procedures

Updated and Adopted May 2018

Review Date: May 2019

<u>Contents:</u>	Page
Standing Orders	2 – 13
Financial Regulations	13-16
Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy	16-19
Complaints Procedure	19-20
General Privacy Policy & Website	20 - 24
Disciplinary Procedure	24 - 26
Environmental Policy	27
Freedom of Information	27
Health & Safety Policy	27 - 28
Social Media / Website Policy	28
Training Policy	29
Whistleblowing Policy	29 - 30
Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014	30 - 31
Equal Opportunities	31 - 32
Date of Adoption / Review	32

STANDING ORDERS

Model Standing Orders – Provided by NALC April 2018 Adopted by Welford Parish Council

May 2018

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 chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.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 chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- 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 chairman 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 chairman of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman 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 chairman 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 the motion has been 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 chairman of the meeting and 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 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 chairman 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 chairman of the meeting.

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 chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting 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 chairman 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.

MEETINGS GENERALLY

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 of 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), a member of the 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 chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting 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 Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).

- p **The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman 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 chairman 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 casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**
See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman 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
 - vii. 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.**
See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.
- 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.

A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2.5 hours.

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. 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 at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- viii. 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;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 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 7.30pm.**
- 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 Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman 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-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman 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 Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman 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 Chairman 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.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman 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 chairman 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 chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within 2 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 3 members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

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.

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 casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

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 2 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 the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 2 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult

- with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, 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.
 - h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE 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.

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

- 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.**

1. 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 chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:
 "The chairman 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 his 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.

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 he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- 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.**

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 Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman 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.**

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 (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 2 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
 - iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
 - iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute records 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;
 - 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;
 - 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 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 Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council 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;

- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also standing order 23).

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.

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 statement 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 and which 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 statement 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 1 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.

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.**
- 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.**

HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council OR 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 of the committee, if he is not available, the vice-chairman (if there is one) of the committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the committee at its next meeting.
- c. The chairman of the committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of [the member of staff's job title]. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by committee.
- 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 of the committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the committee.
- 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's job title] relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the committee.
- f. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the 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).

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. **[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000] The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**
- OR
- [If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeds £200,000] The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- a **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- c **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.**
- d **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.**
- e **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

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.

EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- 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.

COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

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

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.

STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

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.

- a 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.
- b The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
 - c The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Financial Regulations

1. GENERAL

- 1.1** These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2** The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), the Clerk, under the policy direction of the Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's affairs.
- 1.3** The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

- 2.1** Proposals in respect of revenue and capital costs for the following financial year shall be submitted at the November meeting each year.
- 2.2** Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the coming year shall be prepared each year by the RFO for the November meeting.
- 2.3** The Council shall review the estimates at the January meeting each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.4** The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1** Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
- 3.2** No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget, without prior approval by the Council
- 3.3** The RFO shall provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure against that planned at the November meeting.
- 3.4** 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. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5** Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 3.6** No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available.
- 3.7** All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1** All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.2** The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council in May.
- 4.3** The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the Auditor,) and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescales set by the external Auditor.
- 4.4** The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.5** The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the

Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return as compiled annually by the Audit Commission. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.

4. The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers required by the external Auditor.

4.7 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.

5.2 A schedule of the payments required, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to Council, if the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council. If more appropriate the detail may be shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.

5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4 shall be signed by two members of Council.

5.4 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil and sign the invoice.

6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

6.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting.

6.4 If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.

6.5 The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES (if applicable)

7.1 The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by Council.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates, provided that, each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

8.1 It is the Council's policy not to have any loans.

8.2 Any borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose.

8.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

8.4 Any Investments shall be in accordance with the Trustee Act 2000, and shall be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually).

8.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9. INCOME

9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.

9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the RFO.

9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.

9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO.

9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

9.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year-end.

9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to 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 such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.

10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3 All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.

An officer issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11 (l) below,

10.4 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

(a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:

(i) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.

(ii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant.

(iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council.

(iv) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council).

(v) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.

(b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £5,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms.

(c) Such 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.

The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. 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.

(d) 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.

(e) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £5,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

(f) When it is to enter into a contract less than £5,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £1,000 and above £100 the RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.

(g) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will

exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.

12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

13.1 The RFO shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment.

13.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

14. PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.

14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £50.

15. INSURANCE

15.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.

15.2 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.3 The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

15.4 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance, which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

16.1 The RFO shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council.

16.2 When considering any new activity the RFO shall prepare a draft Risk Management policy for the activity and shall bring a draft addressing the legal and financial liabilities and Risk Management issues that arise to Council for consideration and, if thought appropriate, adoption.

17. REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

17.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

Statement of Intent

1.1 In carrying out its functions and responsibilities the Parish Council will promote a culture of honesty, openness and fairness and requires elected members and employees at all levels to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles contained in The Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001 throughout their term of office or employment with the Parish Council. The principles contained in the Order are detailed in Appendix 'A'.

Consequently the Parish Council recognises and accepts the need for an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

The Parish Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities and will deal equally with offenders whether from inside or outside the Parish Council.

1.2 Fraud and corruption are defined as follows:-

- Fraud is the intentional distortion of financial statements, accounts or other records by persons internal or external to the authority which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain or to mislead or misrepresent

- Corruption is the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person to act against the interests of an organisation

In addition, corruption is hereby defined to also include the deliberate failure to disclose an interest in order to obtain a financial or other pecuniary gain for oneself or another.

2. Culture

2.1 The Parish Council promotes a culture of honesty, openness and fairness which supports its opposition to fraud and corruption. The prevention and detection of fraud and corruption and the protection of the public purse are the responsibility of everyone. The elected members and employees play an important role in creating and maintaining this culture. All are positively encouraged to raise concerns regarding fraud and corruption in the knowledge that such concerns will wherever possible be treated in confidence.

2.2 The Parish Council will ensure that any allegations received will be taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner. Those who defraud the Parish Council or who are corrupt or who instigate financial malpractice will be dealt with firmly. There is however a need to ensure that any investigation process is not misused and, therefore, any abuse may, where appropriate, be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

2.3 Where fraud and corruption has occurred due to a breakdown in systems or procedures, arrangements will be made to ensure that the appropriate improvements in systems of control are implemented to prevent a re-occurrence.

3. Prevention

3.1 Role of Elected Members

As elected representatives all Members of the Council have a duty on behalf of their electorate to protect the Council from all forms of fraud and corruption. This is reflected through the adoption of this Policy and compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members, the Councils Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and other relevant legislation.

When they take office elected Members are required to sign to the effect that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct. The Code requires elected Members, inter alia, to declare and register interests and to register receipt of gifts and hospitality. In addition elected members are given the opportunity to attend periodic update sessions on matters of conduct and standards provided by the District Council's Monitoring Officer.

3.2 Role of Officers and Employees

3.2.1 Officer

Officers are responsible for the communication and implementation of this Policy in their respective work areas. They are also responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and that the relevant requirements of each are being met in the day to day conduct of Council business.

Officers are expected to strive to create an environment in which employees feel able to approach them with any concerns they may have regarding suspected irregularities. All such concerns must be communicated to the Parish Clerk.

Special arrangements will apply where employees are responsible for cash handling or are responsible for financial systems and systems that generate payments. Checks are carried out on a regular basis to ensure that proper procedures are being followed.

The Council recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is ensuring that effective steps are taken at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts. The Council has a recruitment procedure which contains appropriate safeguards on matters such as written references and verification of qualifications held. In addition where appropriate the relevant Criminal Records Bureau checks will be undertaken for employees who will be required to work with children or vulnerable people.

3.2.2 Employees

The work of employees is governed by the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and other relevant policies i.e. Health and Safety etc.

In addition to the above employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the instructions given to them by their line manager particularly with regard to the safekeeping of the Council's assets. Employees are expected to be aware of the possibility that fraud, corruption and theft may occur in the workplace. Concerns must be raised through use of the Council's Whistleblowing policy.

3.3 Conflicts of Interest

Elected Members must act as laid down in the Code of Conduct and employees must act in accordance with parish policies to ensure that they avoid situations where there is a potential for a conflict of interests. Effective role separation will ensure that decisions made are seen to be based on impartial advice and therefore avoid questions regarding improper disclosure of confidential information.

3.4 Role of Internal Audit

The Parish Clerk is responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other systems in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Accounts and Audit Regulations. Internal audit plays a significant preventative role in ensuring that the relevant systems deter fraud and corruption and will work with management to identify the procedural changes necessary to prevent the Council from exposure to losses. Internal audit will also investigate cases of suspected irregularity or fraud.

3.5 Role of External Audit

The external auditor has a responsibility to review the Council's arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud and irregularities and arrangements designed to limit the opportunity for corrupt practices. This responsibility is satisfied by undertaking a number of specific reviews and tests of the adequacy of the relevant financial systems and other arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud. The outcome of these reviews and tests are reported each year in the Annual audit letter which is presented to elected Members for approval at Council.

4. Deterrence

4.1 Fraud, corruption and theft are considered to be serious offences against the Council and employees will face a disciplinary investigation if there is an allegation that they have been involved in any of these activities. Where necessary, disciplinary action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings depending on the circumstances of each individual case in a consistent manner.

4.2 Similarly any elected Member will face appropriate action under this policy if it is shown that they have been involved in fraud, corruption or theft against the Council or have otherwise acted illegally.

4.3 The Council will not seek to cover up cases of fraud and corruption but conversely will try to ensure that the results of any action taken, including prosecutions, are notified to the media.

4.4 In all proven cases where financial loss has occurred and it is in the public's interest to do so the Council will seek to recover such loss and will give consideration to publicising the fact.

4.5 All anti-fraud and corruption activities, including the adoption of this policy, will be publicised to make employees and the public aware of the Council's commitment to taking appropriate action on fraud and corruption when it occurs.

5 Detection and Investigation

5.1 Systems of internal control have been established together with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to deter fraud and corruption. These are complemented by the work undertaken by Internal Audit in the review of systems and financial controls.

5.2 In addition it is often the vigilance of employees and members of the public that aids detection. Employees are to be encouraged to raise their concerns without the fear of recrimination and the Council's Whistleblowing procedure has been designed specifically to address this matter.

5.3 Frauds are, in some cases, discovered by chance or 'tip-off' and arrangements are in place to enable such information to be properly dealt with. 5.4 All suspected irregularities should be reported directly, or via an intermediary, to the Parish Clerk. This is essential to ensure the consistent treatment of information regarding fraud and corruption and will facilitate a proper and thorough investigation.

5.5 Investigations will normally be conducted by the Council's RFO / Parish Clerk who will determine whether or not referral to the Police is appropriate after consultation with the Chairman of the Council. The outcome of all investigations where loss has been suffered will be reported to the Council's external auditor.

5.6 Following the completion of an investigation, the circumstances will be assessed to determine the need for procedural and system changes to ensure that future risks are eliminated.

5.7 Where necessary, following the investigation, the Council's disciplinary procedures will be applied to any employee found to be guilty of improper behaviour.

6 Awareness and Training

6.1 The Council recognises that the sustained success of this policy and its general credibility will depend upon the effectiveness of its training programmes and awareness on the part of elected members and employees throughout the organisation.

6.2 Employees will be made aware of their responsibilities and the procedures to be followed for the safekeeping of Council's assets and will be advised that failure to adhere to the specified procedures may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

7 Conclusion

The Council has in place a network of systems and procedures to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. The Council is determined to ensure that these arrangements will keep pace with future developments in prevention and detection techniques regarding fraudulent or corrupt activity that may affect its operations.

The Parish Clerk has day to day responsibility for the successful operation of the relevant systems supported by internal and external audit and will ensure that this policy is reviewed annually in order to be satisfied that the Council's exposure to potential fraud and corruption is minimised and that the results of this review are reported to the full Council.

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

1. Welford Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

3.1. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

3.2. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on September 2016 and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of West Berkshire Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of West Berkshire Council.

4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The contact details can be found at www.welford-parish.org

6. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.

8. The Clerk or the Council as appropriate will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.

9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action. If any, the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full Council and usually within eight weeks you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint

General Privacy Policy

Updated May 2018, as published on www.welford-parish.org

Your personal data – what is it? “Personal data” is any information about a living individual which allows them to be identified from that data (for example a name, photographs, videos, email address, or address). Identification can be directly using the data itself or by combining it with other information which helps to identify a living individual (e.g. a list of staff may contain personnel ID numbers rather than names but if you use a separate list of the ID numbers which give the corresponding names to identify the staff in the first list then the first list will also be treated as personal data).

The processing of personal data is governed by legislation relating to personal data which applies in the United Kingdom including the General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”) and other legislation relating to personal data and rights such as the Human Rights Act.

Who are we?

This Privacy Notice is provided to you by Welford Parish Council which is the data controller for your data. Other data controllers the council works with:

- local authorities
- Community groups

We may need to share your personal data we hold with them so that they can carry out their responsibilities to the council. If we and the other data controllers listed above are processing your data jointly for the same purposes, then the council and the other data controllers may be “joint data controllers” which mean we are all collectively responsible to you for your data. Where each of the parties listed above are processing your data for their own independent purposes then each of us will be independently responsible to you and if you have any questions, wish to exercise any of your rights (see below) or wish to raise a complaint, you should do so directly to the relevant data controller. A description of what personal data the council processes and for what purposes is set out in this Privacy Notice.

The council will process some or all of the following personal data where necessary to perform its tasks:

- Names, titles, and aliases, photographs;
- Contact details such as telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses;
- Where they are relevant to the services provided by a council, or where you provide them to us, we may process information such as gender, age, marital status, nationality, education/work history, academic/professional qualifications, hobbies, family composition, and dependants;

How we use sensitive personal data

- We may process sensitive personal data including, as appropriate: - information about your physical or mental health or condition in order to monitor sick leave and take decisions on your fitness for work; - your racial or ethnic origin or religious or similar information in order to monitor compliance with equal opportunities legislation; - in order to comply with legal requirements and obligations to third parties.
- These types of data are described in the GDPR as “Special categories of data” and require higher levels of protection. We need to have further justification for collecting, storing and using this type of personal data.
- We may process special categories of personal data in the following circumstances: - In limited circumstances, with your explicit written consent. - Where we need to carry out our legal obligations. - Where it is needed in the public interest.
- Less commonly, we may process this type of personal data where it is needed in relation to legal claims or where it is needed to protect your interests (or someone else’s interests) and you are not capable of giving your consent, or where you have already made the information public.

Do we need your consent to process your sensitive personal data?

- In limited circumstances, we may approach you for your written consent to allow us to process certain sensitive personal data. If we do so, we will provide you with full details of the personal data that we would like and the reason we need it, so that you can carefully consider whether you wish to consent. The council will comply with data protection law. This says that to send you communications which you have requested and that may be of interest to you. These may include information about campaigns, appeals, other new projects or initiatives;
- To process relevant financial transactions including grants and payments for goods and services supplied to the council
- To allow the statistical analysis of data so we can plan the provision of services. Our processing may also include the use of CCTV systems for the prevention and prosecution of crime.

What is the legal basis for processing your personal data?

The council is a public authority and has certain powers and obligations. Most of your personal data is processed for compliance with a legal obligation which includes the discharge of the council’s statutory functions and powers. Sometimes when exercising these powers or duties it is necessary to process personal data of residents or people using the council’s services. We will always take into account your interests and rights.

This Privacy Notice sets out your rights and the council’s obligations to you. We may process personal data if it is necessary for the performance of a contract with you, or to take steps to enter into a contract. An example of this would be processing your data in connection with the use of sports facilities, or the acceptance of an allotment garden tenancy. Sometimes the use of your personal data requires your consent. We will first obtain your consent to that use.

Sharing your personal data

This section provides information about the third parties with whom the council may share your personal data. These third parties have an obligation to put in place appropriate security measures and will be responsible to you directly for the manner in which they process and protect your personal data. It is likely that we will need to share your data with some or all of the following (but only where necessary):

- The data controllers listed above under the heading “Other data controllers the council works with”;
- Our agents, suppliers and contractors. For example, we may ask a commercial provider to publish or distribute newsletters on our behalf, or to maintain our database software;
- On occasion, other local authorities or not for profit bodies with which we are carrying out joint ventures e.g. in relation to facilities or events for the community.

How long do we keep your personal data?

We will keep some records permanently if we are legally required to do so. We may keep some other records for an extended period of time. For example, it is currently best practice to keep financial records for a minimum period of 8 years to support HMRC audits or provide tax information. We may have legal obligations to retain some data in connection with our statutory obligations as a public authority. The council is permitted to retain data in order to defend or pursue claims. In some cases the law imposes a time limit for such claims (for example 3 years for personal injury claims or 6 years for contract claims).

We will retain some personal data for this purpose as long as we believe it is necessary to be able to defend or pursue a claim. In general, we will endeavour to keep data only for as long as we need it. This means that we will delete it when it is no longer needed. Your rights and your personal data You have the following rights with respect to your personal data: When exercising any of the rights listed below, in order to process your request, we may need to verify your identity for your security.

In such cases we will need you to respond with proof of your identity before you can exercise these rights.

1) The right to access personal data we hold on you

- At any point you can contact us to request the personal data we hold on you as well as why we have that personal data, who has access to the personal data and where we obtained the personal data from. Once we have received your request we will respond within one month.
- There are no fees or charges for the first request but additional requests for the same personal data or requests which are manifestly unfounded or excessive may be subject to

2) The right to correct and update the personal data we hold on you

- If the data we hold on you is out of date, incomplete or incorrect, you can inform us and your data will be updated.

3) The right to have your personal data erased

- If you feel that we should no longer be using your personal data or that we are unlawfully using your personal data, you can request that we erase the personal data we hold.
- When we receive your request we will confirm whether the personal data has been deleted or the reason why it cannot be deleted (for example because we need it for to comply with a legal obligation).

4) The right to object to processing of your personal data or to restrict it to certain purposes only

- You have the right to request that we stop processing your personal data or ask us to restrict processing. Upon receiving the request we will contact you and let you know if we are able to comply or if we have a legal obligation to continue to process your data.

5) The right to data portability

- You have the right to request that we transfer some of your data to another controller. We will comply with your request, where it is feasible to do so, within one month of receiving your request.

6) The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time for any processing of data to which consent was obtained

- You can withdraw your consent easily by telephone, email, or by post (see Contact Details below).

7) The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office.

- You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. International data transfers Information that we collect may be stored and processed in and transferred between any of the countries in which we operate in order to enable us to use the information in accordance with this privacy policy.

If you are in the European Economic Area (EEA), information which you provide may be transferred to countries which do not have data protection laws equivalent to those in force in the EEA. In addition, personal information that you submit for publication on the website will be published on the internet and may be available, via the internet, around the world. You expressly agree to such transfers of personal information.

Further processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Privacy Notice, then we will provide you with a new notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

Website Privacy

We are committed to safeguarding the privacy of our website visitors; this policy sets out how we will treat your personal information.

What information do we collect on our website?

We may collect, store and use the following kinds of personal data:

- (a) information about your computer and about your visits to and use of this website (including your IP address, geographical location, browser type, referral source, length of visit and number of page views)
- (b) any other information that you choose to send to us

Cookies

A cookie consists of information sent by a web server to a web browser, and stored by the browser. The information is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page from the server. This enables the web server to identify and track the web browser.

Cookies can identify users, remember preferences, and help users complete tasks without having to re-enter information when visiting multiple pages or returning to your site. This helps provide a more personalised and slick user experience. As advised on the Pop Up at the foot of the page - by using our website you are consenting to the use of cookies. We may use both "session" cookies and "persistent" cookies on the website.

We will use the session cookies to keep track of you whilst you navigate the website. We will use the persistent cookies to enable our website to recognise you when you visit. Session cookies will be deleted from your computer when you close your browser. Persistent cookies will remain stored on your computer until deleted, or until they reach a specified expiry date.

We use Weebly to analyse the use of this website. Weebly analytics generates statistical and other information about website use by means of cookies, which are stored on users' computers.

The information generated relating to our website is used to create reports about the use of the website. Weebly will store this information. Weebly privacy policy is available at www.weebly.com/uk/privacy Most browsers allow you to refuse to accept cookies. (For example, in Internet Explorer you can refuse all cookies by clicking "Tools", "Internet Options", "Privacy", and selecting "Block all cookies" using the sliding selector.) This will, however, have a negative impact upon the usability of many websites.

Third party websites

The website contains links to other websites. We are not responsible for the privacy policies or practices of third party websites. Using your personal data Personal data submitted on this website will be used for the purposes specified in this privacy policy or in relevant parts of the website. Where you submit personal information for publication on our website, we will publish and otherwise use that information in accordance with the licence you grant to us. We will not without your express consent provide your personal information to any third parties for the purpose of direct marketing. Security of your personal data

We will take reasonable technical and organisational precautions to prevent the loss, misuse or alteration of your personal information. Of course, data transmission over the internet is inherently insecure, and we cannot guarantee the security of data sent over the internet. General Amendment, Updating Information & Contact Details Policy amendments

We may update this privacy policy from time-to-time by posting a new version on our website. You should check this page occasionally to ensure you are happy with any changes.

Your rights

You may instruct us to provide you with any personal information we hold about you.

Updating information

Please let us know if the personal information which we hold about you needs to be corrected or updated.

This Notice was last updated in May 2018.

Contact Details

Please contact us if you have any questions about this Privacy Notice or the personal data we hold about you or to exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints at:

The Data Controller: Welford Parish Council Clerk Email: welfordparish@yahoo.com

Disciplinary Procedure

1 INTRODUCTION

This disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and job performance at all times, including the need to: -

- Fulfil the duties specified in their contract of employment.
- Be honest and act beyond suspicion of dishonesty.
- Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the council's image and reputation with the public.

1.1 This policy indicates the disciplinary procedure that will normally be followed in the event of misconduct or underperformance. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded as misconduct leading to disciplinary proceedings. The list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- I. Unsatisfactory time keeping.
- II. Absenteeism, including any absence from work during a working day without prior authorisation or instruction.
- III. Failure to comply with rules and regulations applicable to job requirements.
- IV. Failure by an employee to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her post to the standard expected by the council.
- V. Insubordination.

1.2 The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the council as Gross Misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- I. Refusal or repeated failure by an employee to carry out his or her duties.
- II. Falsification of documents or information (including expense claims).
- III. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
- IV. Assaulting a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the council.
- V. Insulting, indecent or offensive behaviour towards a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the council.
- VI. Serious or repeated harassment (including sexual and racial harassment).
- VII. Incapacity at work due to the influence of alcohol, unprescribed drugs or any other substance.
- VIII. Wilful damage to council property.
- IX. Theft, unauthorised use or possession of council property or theft of the property of a fellow employee.
- X. Conduct bringing the council into disrepute.

Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the council as amounting to gross misconduct

2 SCOPE

The procedure applies to all employees of Welford Parish Council

3 INFORMAL ACTION

3.1 In cases of minor misconduct or underperformance managers will deal with matters informally by discussing the issues with the employee and encouraging them to achieve the required standards. This will involve setting clearly defined objectives and /or standards, monitoring them over a reasonable time period and providing training and appropriate support. Such actions are not part of a formal disciplinary process.

4 STANDARD COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

4.1 In the case of serious misconduct, or continued minor misconduct, or underperformance, the Council may deem it necessary to consider a formal disciplinary sanction. The following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.

4.2 The Council will investigate any alleged misconduct or underperformance and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses.

4.3 If an employee is accused of any Gross Misconduct he or she may be suspended from work on full pay pending the outcome of an investigation into the alleged offence(s) and the holding of a disciplinary hearing. During this time the employee should remain away from the workplace and should not contact colleagues or Councillors without prior permission. The Council may require the employee to attend a meeting to investigate the circumstance of the alleged offence whilst suspended from work.

4.4 Following the investigation the council will write to the employee inviting them to attend a disciplinary hearing to discuss the matter. The council will set out in writing the allegations of misconduct, under performance concerns, or other circumstances which lead the council to contemplate taking disciplinary action against the employee. The employee will be warned if the disciplinary action might amount to dismissal.

4.5 The employee will be provided with any relevant supporting evidence and a copy of this disciplinary policy. The letter will also advise the employee of their right to be accompanied at the hearing by a workplace colleague or trade union official.

4.6 The employee will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to consider his or her response to the information provided in the letter before attending the meeting. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

4.7 Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within 5 working days of the council sending the employee the letter.

4.8 If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee or for the employee's companion should he or she wish to be accompanied to the meeting) the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days. If the employee fails to attend on this second date then the hearing may proceed in their absence, or it may be postponed again should there be reasonable cause.

4.9 The employee will have the opportunity to state their case at the disciplinary hearing. The Chairman of the meeting may adjourn the hearing to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated. The employee will be informed of the period of any adjournment.

4.10 After the meeting the Council will inform the employee of their decision and any applicable sanction in writing within 5 working days unless additional investigation is required.

4.11 If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision he or she must notify the council in writing within 5 days of receiving written notice of the decision. The employee should set out full grounds for appeal prior to the meeting.

4.12 If the employee notifies the council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.

4.13 A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the council receiving notification that the employee wishes to appeal. If the meeting date is inconvenient for the employee or the employee's companion he or she may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

4.14 At the meeting any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered together with any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed but the sanction originally imposed will not be increased upon appeal. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated.

4.15 After the disciplinary appeal meeting the council will inform the employee of its final decision in writing within 5 working days.

4.16 If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.

5 FORMAL DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS FOLLOWING DISCIPLINARY HEARING

5.1 VERBAL WARNINGS

Verbal Warnings are issued for most first instances of general misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the offence. If the employee is given a Verbal Warning he or she will be warned of the likely consequences of any further disciplinary offences or a failure to improve his or her conduct to the satisfaction of the council. A note confirming the Verbal Warning will be placed on the employees personnel file and a copy will be provided to the employee. A Verbal Warning will normally remain in force for 6 months.

The Verbal Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

5.2 STAGE 1 - FIRST WRITTEN WARNING FOR MISCONDUCT

In the case of a serious offence or repetition of an earlier minor offence the employee will normally be given a First Written Warning. A First Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman of Welford Parish Council and will set out:

- i. the nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- ii. the likely consequences of any further offence or failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action; and
- iv. the employee's right of appeal.

A first Written Warning will normally remain in force for 6 months.

The First Written Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

5.3 STAGE 1 - FIRST WRITTEN WARNING FOR UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

In the case of a problem of continued underperformance then the employee will be given a first written warning of the need to improve performance. A first written warning will be issued by the Chairman of Welford Parish Council and will set out:

1. The precise nature of the problem of performance and the improvement required and the timescale for improvement, together with review dates
2. The likely consequences of failure by the employee to improve their performance to an acceptable standard
3. That failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
4. The employee's right of appeal

A first written warning of need to improve performance will normally remain in force for 6 months

5.4 STAGE 2 - FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

If performance does not improve, or if further misconduct occurs within the time period specified in a First Written Warning, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious the employee will be given a Final Written Warning following the disciplinary hearing. A Final Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman of Liss Parish Council and will set out:

- i. the nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- ii. the likely consequences of any further offence or a failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and
- iv. the employee's right of appeal.

Final Written Warnings may also be issued in circumstances where the misconduct does not amount to gross misconduct, but is sufficiently serious enough to warrant only one written warning.

A Final Written Warning will normally remain in force for 12 months.

5.5 STAGE 3 - DISMISSAL WITH NOTICE

If there is insufficient improvement after the period notified in stage 2 the employee will be dismissed with the appropriate notice following the disciplinary hearing.

A letter will be sent to the employee detailing the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which their employment will terminate and the arrangements for the notice period. The letter will detail the employee's right of appeal.

6 GROSS MISCONDUCT (DISMISSAL WITHOUT NOTICE)

If the Council finds the employee to be guilty of gross misconduct his or her employment will be terminated summarily without notice or pay in lieu of notice following the investigation and the disciplinary hearing.

A letter will be sent to the employee by the Chairman of the Council following the dismissal detailing the reasons for the dismissal and the date on which the employment terminated. The letter will inform the employee of their right to appeal.

This document does not form part of the contract of employment.

Environmental Policy

Welford Parish Council aims to run its business and its premises in such a way that it embraces, to the best possible effect, all relevant environmental matters to the benefit of the Council and local residents.

The Environment

The key adverse environmental impacts concerning the Parish Council are:

- Material consumption – office supplies, equipment and furniture;
- Emissions to air from the use of energy in our building and fuel in transport;
- Waste management;
- Suppliers' environmental performance;
- Management of Grounds.

To reduce the effect of these adverse impacts, the Parish Council will aim to embrace the following objectives:

- Minimise material consumption and consider the lifecycle impact of any purchase;
- Reduce waste and re-use material wherever possible;
- Embrace recycling opportunities for re-used waste;
- Improve the quality of its working environment;
- Minimise CO2 emissions produced by Parish Council activities;
- Minimise energy use and emissions to air;
- Encourage suppliers to raise their environmental performance;
- Conserving biodiversity on Council owned grounds.

Energy Management

The Parish Council is committed to responsible energy management and will, where possible, promote energy efficiency through its operations by the following actions.

Freedom of Information Act

The following information is available from Welford Parish Council and can be found as follows:

Information Available	How it can be obtained
Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts	Website Contacting Clerk
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website Contacting Clerk
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address)	Contacting Clerk

Health and Safety Policy

GENERAL STATEMENT

1. Welford Parish Council recognises its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy environment for all its employees, contractors, voluntary helpers and others who may be affected by the activities of the Council.
2. The Council will make every effort to meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
3. If appropriate, the Council will seek expert technical advice on Health and Safety matters

AIMS OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK POLICY

To provide as far as is reasonably practicable:

1. A safe place of work and a safe working environment.

2. Sufficient information, instruction and training for employees, contractors and voluntary helpers to carry out their work safely.
3. Care and attention to health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors, voluntary helpers and members of the public who may be affected by the Council's activities.

ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CARRYING OUT HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AT WORK

As the Council's Health and Safety Officer, the Clerk will:

1. Keep informed of relevant Health and Safety Policy legislation and inform the Council accordingly.
2. Make effective arrangements to implement the Health and Safety at Work Policy.
3. Ensure that matters of Health and Safety are recorded and reported to Council or the relevant Committee.
4. Ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out of working practices and assets and maintain record of risk assessments.
5. Make effective arrangements to ensure that contractors or voluntary helpers working for the council comply with all reasonable Health and Safety at Work requirements. All contractors will be given a copy of the Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy under cover of the attached letter.
6. Ensure that work activities by the Council do not unreasonably jeopardise the health and safety of members of the public.
7. Maintain a central record of notified accidents.
8. When an accident or hazardous incident occurs take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.

Social Media / Website Policy

1. Scope

This policy covers the use of social media and networking sites, established and managed Welford Parish Council.

Social media is a term for websites based on user participation and user-generated content.

The policy also covers the representation of any Councillor or employee within existing social channels who acts on behalf of the authority and presents themselves in a professional capacity.

This policy covers some aspects of personal use of social media. Employees can be disciplined for inappropriate comments leading to discrimination, harassment or upset of any staff member or resident. Councillors are bound by the Members Code of Conduct and in complying with this should adhere to this policy. Allegations that Councillors have breached the policy may result in referrals to the Standards process as a contravention of the Code. Employees and Councillors maintain their right to privacy and freedom of expression.

This policy covers the Welford Parish Council as employers. The organisations will not use social media to discriminate and will maintain confidentiality.

2. Key Principles

The key principles of Welford Parish Council's use of a Parish Website is to:

- provide a valuable service to our customers
- share timely relevant information
- encourage open dialogue
- be honest and transparent

News Posts on Website

- Will be administered by the Clerk
- Information supplied by Parishioners will be forwarded to the Council for approval prior to uploading
- All posts will be uploaded with a 'Comments by Approval' status and comments will be reviewed by the Clerk prior to be posted.
- Adverts will be agreed with the Council before they are posted.

Training Policy

Statement of Intent

Welford Parish Council is committed to ensuring its staff and Councillors are trained to the highest standard and kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget each year to enable staff to be given the training necessary for their role and Councillors to attend training and conferences relevant to their office.

Training requirements for councillors will usually be identified by the Chairman and Clerk and opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the full council.

The Council will pay the annual subscription to the Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) to enable staff and councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

Councillor Training

It is recognised that it may be difficult for some councillors to attend training during the daytime because of their work commitments. Councillors will, however, still be encouraged to attend training provided by its partner authorities and BALC and attend conferences whenever possible.

All training presentation papers will be retained and used for in-house training and information sharing.

New Councillors should receive the following information:

1. Welford Parish Council Policy & Procedures Document, including standing orders and financial regulations.
2. Timetable of meetings for the coming year
3. The Good Councillors Guide from BALC
4. Minutes of the last 2 meetings
5. Copy of the last Annual Audit document

Whistle Blowing Policy

Responsibilities of Members of Staff on Discovery of Fraud, Misconduct, or Wrongful Doing by Others

As part of an effective system of internal control, the Council is required to have procedures in place for members of staff to be able to report, in total confidence, any evidence or suspicions of wrongdoing by others within their workplace.

Hopefully you will never have the need to use these instructions. However if a situation does arise which causes you worry or concern, the procedures outlined below are designed to enable you to report to the right person who will know what to do next.

What to do and what **not** to do

First of all, **don't** worry.

Instead, you should act in accordance with the instructions set out in this memorandum, which are designed to ensure that further impartial checks are carried out before any appropriate action is taken. These procedures should also give you the reassurance that all reported incidents will be properly and fully investigated. Whether this proves to be groundless or not, provided that you have acted in good faith and in the best interests of the Council when reporting your suspicions, there will be absolutely no adverse consequences for you.

Please note that you are **not** expected to know the precise nature of any wrongdoing, nor its extent. In particular, you are **not** authorised to carry out any investigation work on your own account to obtain evidence or confirm your suspicions.

In no circumstances should you confront any member of staff whom you suspect of any wrongdoing.

These arrangements are an important and integral part of the Council's control systems. All members of staff are given a copy of this memorandum and are expected to understand and comply with it.

Who you should contact

All staff should address their suspicions to the Clerk, who has responsibility for internal control. Contact may be made either by telephone or in writing to the Council offices with the envelope marked "Private and Confidential - to be opened by addressee only". In the Clerk's absence, usually annual leave, the Assistant Clerk will handle the matter. In exceptional circumstances (or if your suspicions involve the Clerk you should contact the Chairman of the Council. Depending on the nature of the suspicion, s/he will either take up the matter with the Clerk or contact the Council's Internal Auditors.

What happens next?

Once you have reported your suspicions, you should await acknowledgement. You should **not** discuss your suspicions with anyone in the meantime. You will always receive a written acknowledgment within 2 weeks. You may be requested to attend an interview, and this will be arranged in absolute privacy. Keep a copy of any report or item submitted. If you have not had any response from the Clerk within two weeks you should contact the Chairman of the Council. Remember: you are **not** expected to form any judgment about your findings. The responsibility of every employee is primarily to notify one (or more if you wish) of the contacts named above, who will know what further procedures will need to be taken.

The Legal Position

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives statutory protection to any employee who, with "reasonable belief", discloses information suggesting that a criminal offence has been committed or that there has been a failure to comply with any legal obligation, or that such facts are being deliberately concealed. The disclosure must be made to the employer's representatives, as directed in this memorandum unless there are exceptional circumstances for not doing so. Further guidance may be obtained in confidence from Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd's hotline on 0207 0727445 until 31st March 2017 & after that from Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments.

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The following notice will be displayed at all Parish Council meetings:

RECORDING AND REPORTING OF PROCEEDINGS BY THE MEDIA AND GENERAL PUBLIC

- Audio and visual recordings of a meeting of the Council, Committees and other Council bodies by the general public, or the media, is permitted. It would be helpful if those wishing to record could contact the Council before the meeting so that we can ensure the necessary facilities are in place.
- The Chair of the meeting will advise the public that the meeting is being recorded.
- A request to record a meeting shall only be refused if the Chair of the meeting believes recording would disrupt the meeting.
- Notices will be displayed in the room advising the public that meetings can be recorded legally.
- The Council may record meetings for minuting purposes only. The relevant Chair will make an announcement to this effect.

Limitations

Although there is a statutory right to photograph and record Council meetings the proceedings of that meeting must not be disrupted by the use of media tools and must not inhibit community involvement in the proceedings.

Audio and Visual Recording

Your Obligations

Any member of the public, or of the media, wishing to photograph or record a meeting is asked to comply with the following:

- a) any photography or audio / visual recording takes place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the Chair so as to reduce disruption to the proceedings;
- b) use of flash photography or additional lighting is for a limited period only during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed in advance with the Chair;
- c) if the Chair feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way, or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached, then the operator of the equipment will stop;

- d) if, during the meeting, a motion is passed to exclude the press and public, because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to record the meeting are removed and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and /or photography;
- e) if a meeting is adjourned by the Chair then the operator of the equipment should stop any recording or photography at the point at which the meeting is adjourned;
- f) any request made by the Chair regarding respecting the public's right to privacy is complied with;
- g) people seated in the public seating area should not be photographed, filmed or recorded without the consent of the individuals concerned.
- h) use must not be made of an image or recording if consent is refused by a member of the public featured in that recording or image;
- i) photographs, audio, and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

Your Rights

If, as a member of the public, you do not wish to be photographed, filmed or recorded please inform the Clerk in attendance at the meeting or the Chair of the meeting when notice is given that a request to photograph / record has been received.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Welford Parish Council ("LPC") is opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination or harassment.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Welford Parish Council believes that every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all.

No form of intimidation, bullying, victimisation or harassment will be tolerated.

This policy is fully supported by all WPC councillors.

WPC understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and is fully committed to its duty imposed by Section 149 of that Act.*

WPC is an Equal Opportunities employer and provider of services and contractor. It is committed to the promotion, maintenance and protection of the rights of individuals.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- WPC will provide equal opportunities to all its employees (unless there are genuine occupational, qualification or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).
- WPC will treat all employees fairly and equally whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff.
- Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of WPC.
- WPC will oppose all unjustified discrimination proscribed by law on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- WPC will ensure that all recipients of the services delivered directly by LPC are guaranteed the same opportunity and is committed to ensuring that services are relevant and responsive to the needs of all communities and recognises that all members of the community have specific needs and will strive to meet those needs.
- WPC values all members of the community and will treat people with dignity and respect and will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of its service users or communities.
- WPC will encourage and develop all employees to support and carry out the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

3. PROCEDURE

Any employee suffering discrimination or harassment in their employment is encouraged to make an informal complaint or raise a formal grievance under WPC's Grievance Policy.

Employees are encouraged to raise any incidents of discrimination or harassment by members of the public with the Chairman of the Council. WPC will take all practicable steps to protect its employees from discrimination or harassment by the public.

4. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

Any employee breaching WPC's equal opportunities policy will be regarded as committing serious misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Allegations of discrimination by WPC Councillors may result in referral to the Standards Process as a contravention of the Members Code of Conduct.

5. REVIEW

This policy will be monitored and subject to regular review.

Section 149 of the 2010 Act imposes a duty on Parish Councils to take into account:-

- the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and persons who do not share it
- to foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not

"Protected Characteristics" are defined in section 4 of the 2010 Act and are:-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

**This Policy & Procedures Document was
Updated and Adopted by Welford Parish Council
May 2018**

**It will be reviewed on an annual basis or when new regulations
come into force that may affect this.**