

Meopham Parish Council

St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AA - Tel: 01474 813779

Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.meopham-pc.gov.uk



A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

To all Members of Meopham Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Annual Meeting of Meopham Parish Council** on **Tuesday 6th May 2025** at **7:00pm** to be held at the **Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green, DA13 0PZ**. Papers have been circulated for items marked with (*)

Yours faithfully

Lisa Winter

Lisa Winter

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Date of Issue: Tuesday 29th April 2025

AGENDA

1. **To elect the Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2025/2026 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Chairman**
2. **To elect the Vice-Chairman of Meopham Parish Council for the 2025/2026 Council Year and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Vice-Chairman**
3. **Apologies for Absence:** To receive and accept apologies
4. **Declarations of Members' Interests:** To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting
5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15.04.2025. *This item is to confirm the accuracy of the minutes and not to raise matters arising (*)*
6. **Committees & Working Groups – Terms of Reference**
 - 6.1 **Personnel Committee:** To agree the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee (*)
 - 6.2 **Planning:** To agree the terms of reference for the Planning Applications Working Group (*)
7. **Membership**
 - 7.1 **Personnel Committee:** To elect members to the Personnel Committee as per the agreed terms of reference
 - 7.2 **Planning:** To elect members to the Planning Applications Working Group as per the agreed terms of reference
8. **Council Governance**
 - 8.1 **Standing Orders:** To review and approve the Council's Standing Orders for the 2025/2026 municipal year (*)

- 8.2 **Financial Regulations:** To review and approve the Council's Financial Regulations for the 2025/2026 municipal year (*)
- 8.3 **Scheme of Delegation:** To review and approve the Council's Scheme of Delegation for the 2025/2026 municipal year (*)

Note: There are no broad 'policy review' covering all the policies. This is due to officer resource which is severely limited and each policy will be submitted to Full Council in due course. This may require the outsourcing of this work.

9. Annual Review of Council Administration

- 9.1 **Schedule of Meetings:** To agree the schedule of meetings up to and including the next Annual Meeting of Council (*)
- 9.2 **Meeting Start Time:** To agree the start time for all ordinary meetings of the Council
- 9.3 **Asset Register:** To review and approve the inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment (*)
- 9.4 **Keyholders:** To review and approve the key-holders for council buildings and assets (*)
- 9.5 **Professional Memberships:** To review and approve the Council's and employees' memberships to other bodies for 2025/2026 (*)
- 9.6 **Software Licences:** To review and approve the Council's software licences for the 2025/2026 municipal year (*)
- 9.7 **Arrangements for Receiving Correspondence:** To confirm that all councillors will continue to receive summons, agendas and minutes plus other correspondence via their council email address
- 9.8 **Banking Arrangements:** To review and approve the list of bank account signatories for 2025/2026 (*)
- 9.9 **Payments by Standing Order & Direct Debit:** To agree regular payments to be made by either standing order or direct debit for 2025/2026 (*)
- 9.10 **Insurance Cover:** The three year arrangement ends in 2026 and new cover will need to be obtained which in the light of the Employment Tribunal, may be difficult

10. 2024-25 End-of-Year Financial Matters

- 10.1 **To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control:** Councillors are asked to consider the attached Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement. The Chairman of the Council and the Clerk to sign (*)
- 10.2 **Internal Audit Report for 2024-2025:** To receive the Internal Audit report from Mulberry and Co and consider its recommendations (*)
- 10.3 **Annual Governance Statement:** To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024-25, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025 (*)
- 10.4 **Accounting Statements, Bank Reconciliation and Variances:** To approve the Accounting Statements for 2024-25, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2025 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2023-24) to this year (2024-25) (*)
- 10.5 **Exercise of Public Rights:** To note the proposed dates (Tuesday 3 June 2025 to Monday 14 July 2025) for the Exercise of Public Rights as selected by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer
- 10.6 **Financial Risk Assessment:** To review and approve the Financial Risk Assessment (*)

11. Financial Matters

- 11.1 **Schedule of Payments:** To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 28.04.2025 (*)
- 11.2 **Receipts & Payments Report:** To note the receipts and payments report up to 28.04.2025 (*)

- 11.3 **Bank Statements:** To note the Unity, Cambridge and Lloyds bank statements and the supporting bank reconciliation as of 28.04.2025 (*)
- 11.4 **Council Reserves:** To note the reserves balance as of 28.04.2025 (*)
- 12 **Parish Council Representatives on External Bodies:** To agree representatives for the 2025-2026 council year (*)
- 13 **Contracts Register:** To note the Council's contract and leases register for the 2025-2026 municipal year (*)
- 14 **Work Programme for 2025/26:** To note the Council's work programme and agenda management timetable for the 2025-2026 municipal year (*)
- 15 **Harvel Green:** To agree to the request from Harvel Village Hall Management Committee to use Harvel Green for this years' village fete on Saturday 5th July 2025 subject to the receipt of all appropriate documentation
- 16 **Community Grants Scheme – Audit:** To note the report from the Finance Officer following the audit of grants issued in 2024-25 to ensure they were spent in line with the Council's Community Grants Policy (*)

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at 7:00pm at the Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green, DA13 0DQ

Members Present:

Cllr D Bramer
 Cllr S Buchanan
 Cllr A Evans
 Cllr D Fisher
 Cllr P Haslam
 Cllr D Johnson
 Cllr D Sims (Chairman)
 Cllr B Wade
 Cllr P Watson

In Attendance:

L Winter – Clerk
 21 members of the public

Item 1: Election of Chairman for the meeting

F.C. 239 Cllr Evans PROPOSED Cllr Sims. SECONDED by Cllr Fisher.
 Cllr Wade PROPOSED Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED by Cllr Bramer.

There were 5 votes in favour of Cllr Sims. Cllr Sims was Chairman for the meeting.

Item 2: Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies

F.C. 240 We had pre-approved apologies for Cllr Price.

Item 3: Declarations of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting

F.C. 241 Cllr Bramer, Cllr Buchanan and Cllr Wade failed to declare an interest in agenda items 5 and 6. Cllr Bramer stated that they had the right to declare when they reach the items on the agenda.

Item 4: Minutes of Previous Meetings: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18.03.2025

F.C. 242 Cllr Evans PROPOSED an amendment to the minutes that the following disclaimer be included preceding the Public Session statements in these and future minutes:

Disclaimer: The statements made during the Public Session reflect the opinion of the speaker(s) and are not necessarily accurate or factual information.

SECONDED by Cllr Haslam. There were eight votes in favour and one abstention. The motion was carried.

Item 5: Employment Tribunal Cover: To consider covering the respondents Legal Costs and Expenses

F.C. 243 Cllr Bramer declared an interest but stated that she would be exercising her right to speak. She advised that the respondents maybe able to claim against the Council, so in the end could cost the Council more.

Following a lengthy debate Cllr Evans PROPOSED that the cover should not be extended to cover the respondents. SECONDED by Cllr Watson.

A recorded vote was requested.

Cllr D Bramer	ABSTAIN
Cllr S Buchanan	ABSTAIN
Cllr Evans	FOR
Cllr Fisher	FOR
Cllr Haslam	AGAINST
Cllr Johnson	ABSTAIN
Cllr Sims	
Cllr Wade	ABSTAIN
Cllr Watson	FOR

There were three votes in favour, one against, four abstentions and one nothing declared. The motion was carried.

The councillors who failed to declare an interest would be reported to the Monitoring Officer.

Item 6: Release of Independent Investigation Report: To consider the release of the Independent Investigation Report

F.C. 244 Following a lengthy debate Cllr Fisher PROPOSED that the report be released. SECONDED by Cllr Evans.

A recorded vote was requested.

Cllr D Bramer	AGAINST
Cllr S Buchanan	AGAINST
Cllr Evans	FOR
Cllr Fisher	FOR
Cllr Haslam	AGAINST
Cllr Johnson	FOR

Cllr Sims	AGAINST
Cllr Wade	AGAINST
Cllr Watson	FOR

There were four votes in favour and five votes against. The motion fell.

The councillors who failed to declare an interest and voted would be reported to the Monitoring Officer.

Item 7: Poll Cards: To consider issuing poll cards for the by-election in Camer & Meopham Green Ward and Nurstead & Hook Green Ward

F.C. 245 Following a lengthy debate Cllr Buchanan PROPOSED that poll cards be issued. SECONDED by Cllr Watson. All in favour.

Item 8: Public Session & External Reports

8.1 Public Session

F.C. 246 Members of the public were invited to speak on matters of interest.

Disclaimer: The statements made during the Public Session reflect the opinion of the speaker(s) and are not necessarily accurate or factual information.

A member of the public asked a few questions which had arisen following a Freedom of Information request: Why was sponsorship of the Christmas tree not openly offered to all local businesses? Did Cllr Evans pay for her delicious meal?

In response Cllr Evans stated that she had paid for the meal and that she had approached several other companies, physically, regarding the sponsorship of the tree.

A member of the public made a statement on Pitfield Green Toilets.

A member of the public queried why the parish residents were expected to pay solicitors fees for the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk advised that this was within her delegated powers and that it was not for the Chairman of the Council, but for the Clerk, the contents of the advice were exempt from disclosure. Another member of the public asked if the Councillors were able to see the legal advice given to the Clerk. The Clerk stated that she did not know the answer to that.

A member of the public stated that the council were making some bad decisions and made an even worse decision tonight not to cover councillors with the insurance. They then queried why Councillors were asked to approve the payments at Item 12.1 when they have already been paid.

Another member of the public asked if there was any formal agreement in place for the Library.

8.2 Borough Councillors and County Councillor

F.C. 247 There were no Borough Councillors or County Councillor present.

8.3 Police

F.C. 248 There were no Police present.

Item 9: New Website: To consider the quotes received for providing Meopham Parish Council with a new website

F.C. 249 Cllr Haslam PROPOSED Parish Web and Host to provide the new website at a cost of £764. SECONDED by Cllr Bramer. There were eight votes in favour and one abstention. The motion was carried.

Item 10: Training

10.1 New Councillor induction: To approve online training available from KALC £60 or Mulberry Local Authority Services £45+ VAT (various dates available)

F.C. 250 Cllr Evans PROPOSED the approval of online training from either provider. SECONDED by Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

10.2 Finance and Governance Networking Day – Thursday 10th July 2025 – To approve for the Clerk (free) and Finance & Grants Officer (discounted) to attend

F.C. 251 Cllr Bramer asked if the training could be extended out to Councillors?

Cllr Bramer PROPOSED the approval of the training for the Clerk and Finance & Grants Officer. SECONDED by Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Item 11: PAT Testing: To approve the testing of the office portable appliances at a cost of approximately £50 for up to 45 items

F.C. 252 Cllr Wade PROPOSED the approval of the testing of the office portable appliances. SECONDED by Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

Item 12: Financial Matters

12.1 Approval of Payments: To approve the payments made since the last meeting up to 01.04.2025

F.C. 253 Members approved the payments up to 01.04.2025 as per the report.

PROPOSED: Cllr Evans. SECONDED: Cllr Fisher. All in favour.

12.2 Receipts & Payments Report: To note the receipts and payments report up to 01.04.2025

F.C. 254 The receipts and payments report up 01.04.2025 was noted.

12.3 Bank Statements: To note the Unity bank statement and the supporting bank reconciliation as of 31.03.2025

F.C. 255 The bank statement and the supporting bank reconciliation as of 31.03.2025 were noted and signed by the Chairman.

12.4 Council Reserves: To note the reserves balance as of 01.04.2025

F.C. 256 The council reserves were noted as at 01.04.2025.

Item 13: Subscription: To approve the annual KALC subscription

F.C. 257 Cllr Buchanan PROPOSED the approval of the annual KALC subscription. SECONDED by Cllr Watson. All in favour.

Item 14: Liaison Councillor Reports: To receive liaison councillor reports for information only

F.C. 258 Cllr Evans had attended both the Harvel and Culverstone AGM's. She advised that Culverstone had put two requests out. They need a general repairs/handyman and more members.

Cllr Watson advised that Charles Amis was stepping down as the clerk for the Gravesham KALC. He also stated that he had raised the question over allowing access to KALC by Councillors and not just the Chair, but that this remained the status quo at present.

Cllr Watson stated that we need the Local Plan from Gravesham as there is a need to build houses, but we need to be able to look at it as consultees. Cllr Bramer added that many sites had been looked at in the past by a working party and the parish council may need to set up a working party again.

Cllr Buchanan reminded everyone of the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 30th April 2025 at 7pm. All welcome.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

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Personnel Committee - Terms of Reference

Objective

- 1.1 The Personnel Committee will deal with all personnel issues affecting the councils Clerk & RFO, including recruitment and financial aspects, absence (both authorised and unauthorised) pay and conditions of service and has delegated authority to act under S101 1972 LGA.

Membership

- 2.1 The Committee shall consist of the Chairman of the Council and four members elected by Full Council
- 2.2 Full Council will also elect two substitute members whom have full voting rights and can replace a committee member in the event of them giving notice to the Clerk that they will be unable to attend a meeting and therefore risking the quoracy of the meeting. The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee will select a substitute member in the event of the unavailability of a committee member
- 2.3 The committee's chairman will be elected at the first meeting and will not be the Chairman of the Council
- 2.4 The Quorum for a meeting will be 3 Councillors

Meetings

- 3.1 The Committee will meet at least twice per annum, with one meeting being held in March following the appraisal conducted for the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Voting

- 4.1 The Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply to all members of the Committee
- 4.2 The conduct of the meetings (declarations of interest, debate, voting etc) will be governed by the Council's Standing Orders
- 4.3 Decisions will be taken by a majority vote

Rights and Powers

- 5.1 The Committee will have delegated powers to:
 - Take action under the responsibilities set out below.
 - The Committee may convene extra-ordinary meetings in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders
 - The Committee has the right to create sub-committees

Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Committee has delegated authority to act on behalf of the council on the following:
 - To review employment policies and the Employee Handbook, ensuring it is in line with employment law and best practice
 - To ensure the Council fulfils its duty of care towards the Clerk & RFO
 - To conduct the recruitment process for the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. To provide support to the Clerk and the RFO, in the recruitment of other staff as and when requested to do so

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Planning Applications Working Group – Terms of Reference

1. Objective

- 1.1 The Planning Applications Working Group is established to provide advisory recommendations to council officers in response to planning matters received via planning applications, appeal notifications, enforcement reports and decision notices.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The Working Group shall consist of the Chairman of the Council and seven members of the parish council (as agreed at the last FC meeting for the interim period).
- 2.2 The Chairman of the Planning Applications Working Group will be operated on a rotating basis amongst members.
- 2.3 The quorum for a meeting will be a minimum of three Councillors.

3. Meetings

- 3.1 The Working Group will meet at least once a month, except August.
- 3.2 The Parish Council will produce a Schedule of Committee and Working Group Meetings at its Annual Council Meeting in May.
- 3.3 The Working Group will have no meeting in August unless for urgent business, the decision to call a meeting in August will be determined by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council
- 3.4 Each working Group meeting will have the following regular agenda items;
- To consider planning applications received and agree recommendations.
 - To receive an update on planning enforcement cases
 - To receive decision lists from GBC for the preceding month
 - To note the Working Group chairman for the forthcoming month
- 3.5 The Working Group will ordinarily hold its meetings via Teams. Members of the public will be permitted to join the meeting via the Teams link provided on the meeting agenda
- 3.6 In the event of an application being received constituting large-scale development within the parish, or in the event of needing to make a recommendation on a draft Local Plan, the Working Group will meet face-to-face to enable greater levels of public engagement
- 3.7 The meetings will be attended by a clerk.

4. Voting

- 4.1 The Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply to all members of the Working Group
- 4.2 The conduct of the Working Group meetings will be governed by the Council's adopted Standing Orders.
- 4.3 Recommendations will be made through a majority vote of the Working Group.

5. Rights and Powers

- 5.1 The Working Group holds no delegated powers as it is not permitted to hold them under S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5.2 The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Assistant Clerk are granted delegated authority under S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to respond to planning applications, appeal notifications and enforcement reports received from



MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

Adopted by Full Council on 21 May 2024

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1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may 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 chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his/her/their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she/they 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/she/they considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he/she/they is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his/her/their 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 chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his/her/their 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 two minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair 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 chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

- 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 of a committee meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.
- 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 ten minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.

- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than two minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair 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 Chair of the Council may in his/her/their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- r **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her/their casting vote whether or not he/she/they gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

- s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her/their 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/her/their 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.**
- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of two hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. 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 three days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair 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.

5. 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 6pm.** Ordinary meetings shall commence at 7:00pm on a working day excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless he/she/they has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her/their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless he/she/they resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He/she/they may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and**

councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her/their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;

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

- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

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

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

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

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five 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 five 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 chair 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.

10. 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.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

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

12. DRAFT MINUTES

- Full Council meetings •
- Committee meetings •
- Sub-committee meetings •

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

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his/her/their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council. The term 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in these Standing Orders shall be interpreted as meaning one of the types of interest listed in Appendix A of the Code of Conduct'.
- b Unless he/she/they 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/she/they has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they had the interest.

- c Unless he/she/they 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/she/they has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they 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 a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required 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 at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
 - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the

Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.

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

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (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 three days before the meeting confirming his/her/their withdrawal of it;
 - iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her/their office;**
 - iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
 - v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
 - vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
 - vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
 - viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
 - ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
 - x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
 - xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and

destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation 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 spreadsheet for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to all members of the Planning Applications Working Group 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 Planning Applications Working Group or the Full 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).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a 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 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for

fitness of purpose.

- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the “light touch” arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council or the Personnel Committee is subject to standing order 11.

- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the Personnel committee or if they are not available, the vice-chair of the Personnel committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to Full Council at its next meeting.
- c The chair of the Personnel committee or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Personnel 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 chair of the Personnel committee or in their absence, the vice-chair of the Personnel committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Personnel Committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Personnel committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Personnel committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of Full Council.
- 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).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

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

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

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

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.

24. 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
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

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

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

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

MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

This Model Financial Regulations template was produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in April 2024 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on 9/5/2024.

1. General

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

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000; and

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk as RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering the activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the Clerk must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Clerk. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put

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

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. the Clerk ensures the accounting in accordance with the Accounts Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the Clerk must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The Clerk shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the Clerk shall submit them with any related documents to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the Clerk, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.12. The Clerk shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

4.1. Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax England budget requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in October for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council. The Clerk will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.

4.3. No later than October each year, the Clerk shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following three financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.

Any committee shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of November each year. The draft budget with any committee proposals shall be brought forward to full council.

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

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The Clerk should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of**

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

contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.

- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £1000 excluding VAT.
- Such authorisation must be supported by a minute in the case of council or other auditable evidence trail.
- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.

- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £1000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the Clerk.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the Clerk and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Lloyds Bank, Unity Bank and Cambridge Building Society. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the Clerk.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the council or a delegated decision by an officer, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the Clerk may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council may authorise in advance for the year.

- 6.7. A copy of the schedule of payments will be provided to Full Council each month for approval.
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise payments {only} in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £1000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
 - ii. payments of up to £2000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the Clerk certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
 - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 6.10. The Clerk shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk together with the Finance and Grants Officer shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify 3 councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories.

- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next council meeting and appended to the minutes.
- 7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council annually (at the ACM)
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by two of the Clerk and a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.14. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.

- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council meeting}. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and Finance and Grants Officer and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

10. Petty Cash

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

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

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

committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

12. Loans and investments

12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

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

12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk.

13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods supplied at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The Clerk shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the Clerk and shall be considered for writing off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the Clerk considers necessary but at least weekly. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

13.6. The Clerk shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be

made quarterly where the claim exceeds £100 and at least annually at the end of the financial year.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

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

15. Stores and equipment

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

16. Assets, properties and estates

The Clerk shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

17. Insurance

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

18. Charities

- 18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and

separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18 [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

Meopham Parish Council

St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AA - Tel: 01474 813779
 Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk Website: www.meopham-pc.gov.uk



Scheme of Delegation

Introduction

Meopham Parish Council recognises the benefits of enabling its professional officers to take certain decisions in order for the council to be efficient in its operations. It is accepted that there needs to be an appropriate balance between the use of delegation and the need for transparent decision-making at Council meetings.

S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the ability for Council to delegate functions to an officer. The Clerk is therefore provided with delegated powers to enable the smooth administration of the Council. The Council expects that all delegated decisions are reported to the next available council meeting and contained within the Clerk's monthly written report that is also published online for members of the public to read.

The Clerk must ensure any delegated authority is enacted in accordance with:

- The Council's Standing Orders
- The Council's Financial Regulations
- The Council's Statement of Internal Control

The Clerk shall be:

- The Proper Officer and will carry out the functions as provided by the Local Government Act 1972.
- The Responsible Financial Officer in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

Whilst the powers are delegated to the Clerk, the Council enables the Clerk to ask another officer to fulfil the responsibility as and when required.

Delegated Powers & Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities set out in the Clerk's job description, the Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- To authorise bookings of the Council's Village Greens and Judsons Recreation Ground, where the proposed hirer has provided the necessary documents; including a risk assessment and insurance certificates. The Clerk will consult with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council if they deem an event to be 'large-scale/major' to determine whether a decision by Council would be more appropriate.
- To authorise annual leave arrangements for all Parish Council staff, with the provision that the Clerk must confirm the number of annual leave days to be carried forward to the next annual leave year (up to five days) at the March meeting of the Personnel Committee
- To authorise home-working arrangements for all Parish Council staff, subject to the Parish Council Office being manned during its opening hours of 9am-12 noon Monday-Thursday.
- To seek advice on behalf of council from external organisations as and when required in order to inform council decisions such as but not limited to; KALC, NALC, Charity Commission and the Monitoring Officer as and when required

- Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence requiring or requesting information relating to previous decisions of the Council but not correspondence requiring an opinion to be taken by the Council.
- Authorisation to call any extra meetings of the Council or Planning Applications Working Group as necessary, having consulted with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council
- Authorisation to book any venue within the parish for council meetings and the Annual Parish Meeting
- Preparation and submission of comments for Planning Applications received from Gravesham Borough Council. This will be done in consultation with the Planning Applications Working Group who will provide recommended comments. In the event that a time extension cannot be provided to allow consideration at a meeting, the Clerk is authorised to submit a comment in consultation with one of the councillors representing the ward the application is from.
- Handling of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1988 or General Data Protection Regulation (whichever is in force at the time of the request).
- To arrange community events authorised by council and subject to an agreed budget being issued by Council
- In line with the agreed council flagpole policy, to authorise the flying of flags on the council-owned flagpole at the Meopham Windmill site
- To authorise councillor and staff training course bookings, up to the agreed training budget for the year

Date of Adoption	Review Cycle	Date of Next Review
ACM – 21.05.24	Annual	ACM – 06.05.24

Meopham Parish Council

St Johns Centre, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AA Tel: 01474 813779
Email: enquiries@meopham-pc.gov.uk Website: www.meopham-pc.gov.uk



SCHEDULE OF FULL COUNCIL, COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEETINGS FOR 2025-2026

ALL MEETINGS START AT 7:00PM

May 2025	20	Planning Working Group	Teams
June 2025	10	Full Council	Harvel Village Hall
	24	Planning Working Group	Teams
July 2025	8	Full Council	Cricket Pavilion
	22	Planning Working Group	Teams
August 2025		<u>RECESS</u>	
September 2025	9	Full Council	Cricket Pavilion
	23	Planning Working Group	Teams
October 2025	7	Full Council	Harvel Village Hall
	21	Planning Working Group	Teams
	28	Full Council (Budget)	Cricket Pavilion
November 2025	11	Full Council	Harvel Village Hall
	18	Planning Working Group	Teams
	25	Full Council (Budget)	Cricket Pavilion
December 2025	9	Full Council	Cricket Pavilion
	16	Planning Working Group	Teams
January 2026	20	Full Council	Cricket Pavilion
	27	Planning Working Group	Teams
February 2026	10	Full Council	Harvel Village Hall
	24	Planning Working Group	Teams
March 2026	3	Full Council	Cricket Pavilion
	17	Planning Working Group	Teams
April 2026	7	Full Council	Harvel Village Hall
	15	Annual Parish Meeting (NB Wed)	St Johns Centre
	21	Planning Working Group	Teams
May 2026	5	Annual Council Meeting	Cricket Pavilion

Item 9.3

Meopham Parish Council
Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value	Current Value	Location /Responsibility	Estimated Life	Usage/Capacity	Charges
BUILDINGS							
JUDSONS PAVILLION and GARAGE	2020-01-01	306,616.00	306,616.00	JUDSONS PAVILLION M			
PITFIELD TOILETS	2018-01-01	1.00	1.00	PITFIELD GREEN			
		<u>306,617.00</u>	<u>306,617.00</u>				
OTHER ASSESTS							
HARVEL POND FENCE and WOOD POST		2,700.00	2,700.00	HARVEL POND			
SOUTHDOWN SHAW ALLOTMENTS		25,000.00	25,000.00	WROTHAM ROAD MEOI			
		<u>27,700.00</u>	<u>27,700.00</u>				
PARISH OFFICE/SITE							
10 X FEATHER FLAGS AND STANDS	2024-01-01	585.00	585.00	ST JOHNS CENTRE ME			
CIVIC REGALIA	2017-01-01	1,705.00	1,705.00	ST JOHNS CENTRE ME			
COMPUTER EQUIPMENT / OFFICE FURNITURE	2017-01-01	10,864.00	10,864.00	ST JOHNS CENTRE ME			
PORTABLE HEARING LOOP	2018-01-01	1,288.00	1,288.00	ST JOHNS CENTRE ME			
		<u>14,442.00</u>	<u>14,442.00</u>				
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT							
AERO WHIRL (OVERHEAD ROTATOR)	2010-01-01	1,095.00	1,095.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
BIG CITY - AMSTERDAM (MULTI PLAY UNIT	2010-01-01	12,072.00	12,072.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
CITY SEAT (SPRING SEAT)	2010-01-01	498.00	498.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
CITY SWING CRADLE (2 X BABY SWINGS)	2010-01-01	1,510.00	1,510.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
CITY TWIN RIDER (SEESAW)	2010-01-01	1,254.00	1,254.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
MULTI-USE GAMES AREA	2010-01-01	23,500.00	23,500.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
ORBIT (ROUNDABOUT)	2010-01-01	2,795.00	2,795.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
PICNIC TABLE	2010-01-01	654.00	654.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
SLIDE	2010-01-01	1,945.00	1,945.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
STAINLESS STEEL BENCH	2010-01-01	500.00	500.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			

Meopham Parish Council
Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value	Current Value	Location /Responsibility	Estimated Life	Usage/Capacity	Charges
SWING (2 FLAT and 1 BIRDS NEST)	2010-01-01	4,365.00	4,365.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
TEEN SHELTER	2010-01-01	4,300.00	4,300.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
TRIM TRAIL EQUIPMENT	2022-01-01	7,728.00	7,728.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
		62,216.00	62,216.00				
PLAYGROUND SURFACE/AREA							
2 X METAL SIGNS ON GATES	2021-01-01	55.00	55.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
2 X WOOD AND METAL BENCHES		465.00	465.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
METAL FENCING INCLUDING 3 GATES	2017-01-01	2,000.00	2,000.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
PART SURFACE OF PLAY AREA	2021-01-01	16,064.00	16,064.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
SURFACE OF MULTI-USE GAMES AREA	2010-01-01	16,064.00	16,064.00	JUDSONS RECREATION			
		34,648.00	34,648.00				
STREET FURNITURE							
BT KIOSK	2020-08-01	1.00	1.00	MEOPHAM STATION			
BUS SHELTERS X 12	2016-03-01	8,955.00	8,955.00	VARYING LOCATIONS			
BYELAWS NOTICEBOARD- HARVEL	2022-04-01	393.00	393.00	HARVEL VILLAGE HALL			
DRINKING FOUNTAIN	1905-03-16	75.00	75.00	WAR MEMORIAL - MEO			
FLAGSTAFF	1905-05-30	1,252.00	1,252.00	WINDMILL WROTHAM F			
FOWLERS STONE GREEN SIGN	1905-07-13	387.00	387.00	FOWLERS STONE GRE			
HARVEL GREEN - DROP DOWN POSTS X 2	2023-02-01	1,057.00	1,057.00	HARVEL GREEN			
HARVEL GREEN - DROP DOWN POSTS X 2	2023-02-01	1,057.00	1,057.00	HARVEL GREEN			
LITTER BINS		1,664.00	1,664.00	CULVERSTONE/PRIEST			
PLANTERS X 8	2024-11-01	2,440.00	2,440.00	5X WAR MEMORIAL			
PLASWOOD BENCH	2022-10-01	469.00	469.00	CULVERSTONE GREEN			
PUBLIC BENCHES X 17	2023-05-01	4,800.00	4,800.00	VARIOUS LOCATIONS II			
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - CAMER PARADE	2021-09-01	1,460.00	1,460.00	CAMER PARADE			
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - CULVERSTONE	2020-07-01	1,525.00	1,525.00	CULVERSTONE GREEN			

Meopham Parish Council
Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value	Current Value	Location /Responsibility	Estimated Life	Usage/Capacity	Charges
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - HARVEL	1905-07-10	1,438.00	1,438.00	HARVEL VILLAGE HALL			
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - JUDSONS PAVIL	2021-03-01	2,722.00	2,722.00	JUDSONS PAVILLION			
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - MEOPHAM GRE	2015-09-01	2,814.00	2,814.00	MEOPHAM GREEN			
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS - NEVILLE PARAD	2020-11-01	671.00	671.00	NEVILLE PARADE			
VILLAGE SIGN - HARVEL GREEN	1905-07-07	145.00		HARVEL GREEN			
VILLAGE SIGN - HOOK GREEN	1998-07-01	3,500.00	3,500.00	HOOK GREEN			
VILLAGE SIGN - PRIESTWOOD GREEN	1905-07-13	385.00	385.00	PRIESTWOOD GREEN			
WAR MEMORIAL	1905-04-02	200.00	200.00	MEOPHAM GREEN			
		37,410.00	37,265.00				
Grand Total:		483,033.00	482,888.00				

Annual Meeting of Meopham Parish Council
Agenda Item 9.4

MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL – KEYHOLDERS FOR 2025/26

Parish Council Office (St John's Centre):

Front Door Key Clerk Finance & Grants Officer Chairman of Council Office Door Key Clerk Finance & Grants Officer Chairman of Council Key Safe All staff have code to access key safe
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Judson's Recreation Ground

Pavilion	Meopham Colts (The Parish Office currently have no keys as the locks were changed by The Meopham Colts)
Gates	Parish Office, Meopham Colts, GBC Horticulture and Service Contractor
Play Area	<i>No padlock</i>

Southdown Shaw Allotments

Main Entrance Gate	Parish Office and allotment holders
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Harvel Green

Gate on the Green	Parish Office, GBC Horticulture and Mr I Carey
Dropdown post X 2 with padlocks	Parish office x 2, L Martin x 1, I Carey x 1 (HRA), Chairman, Harvel Village Hall Committee x 1
Harvel Pond Gates X 2	Parish Office and I Carey

Pitfield Green Toilets

Pitfield Green Toilet block	Parish Office
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Item 9.5

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2025-2026

Total budget in 2025-2026 is £4816.00

	Subscriptions paid in 2024/25	Subscriptions due in 2025/26	Renewal Date & Contract Length	Officer Recommendation
Kent Association of Local Councils -- Council Subscription	£1765 + VAT	£1870 + VAT	1 st April 2026 -- Annual Renewal	Renew membership
SLCC Membership for Clerk	£300.00	£315.00	28 Feb 2026 -- Annual Renewal	Renew membership
SLCC Membership for Deputy Clerk	£255.00	£285.00	2025 Annual Renewal	Commence Membership when appointed
SLCC Membership for Assistant Clerk	£210.00	£230.00	2025 Annual Renewal	Commence membership when appointed
SLCC Membership for Finance & Grants Officer	£150.00	£165.00	28 Feb 2026 -- Annual Renewal	Renew membership
Information Commissioners Office (ICO)	£40	£35	05 July 2025 -- Annual Renewal	Renew membership

Agenda Item: 9.6

Report to: **Annual Council Meeting (06.05.25)**

Subject: **Software Licences**

The Council currently has the following software licenses in place.

Software Name	Provider	Annual Cost	Purpose
Scribe	Starboard Systems	£933.12	Accounting System
Home Hosting Meopham-pc.gov.uk	Cloud Next Ltd	£49.99	Emails
Microsoft 365	Heliocentrix	Variable	Phonelines and Microsoft 365
Parish Online	Geoxsphere	£356.00	Digital Mapping System

It is RECOMMENDED that the Parish renews the licences apart from the Parish Online Geoxsphere Digital Mapping System. This is currently not being used and until such time that we have sufficient staff I would recommend not having this licence. The work already carried out will be retained.

Bank Signatories for 2025/26

Unity Trust Bank – Current Account

Proposed Signatories: Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Evans, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Price and Cllr Wade

Administrators: Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon

Corporate Multipay Card: Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon

Proposed Changes –

- ***Add Cllr Haslam and Cllr Wade***

Lloyds Bank – Treasurers Account

Proposed Signatories: Cllr Buchanan, Cllr Evans, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Price and Cllr Wade

Administrators: Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon

Proposed Changes –

- ***Add Cllr Haslam***
- ***Add Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon as Administrators***

Cambridge Building Society – Council Saver

Proposed Signatories: Cllrs Buchanan, Cllr Evans, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Price (max 4)

Administrators:

Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon

Proposed Changes –

- ***Add Cllr Haslam***
- ***Add Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon as Administrators***

Redwood – 35 day notice business savings

Proposed Signatories: Cllrs Buchanan, Cllr Evans, Cllr Haslam and Cllr Price

Administrators: Lisa Winter and Tracey Hanlon

Account to be opened with the proposed signatories and administrators

Agenda Item: 9.9

Report to: **Annual Council Meeting (06.05.25)**

Subject: **Payments by Standing Orders & Direct Debit**

Summary: **To consider approving the following payments being made by standing order and direct debit for 2025-2026**

For the 2025-2026 financial year I recommend the following are paid by either standing order or direct debit:

Payee	Type	Service	Amount	Payment Date
L Winter	Standing Order	Salary	Agreed salary	20 th of the month
T Hanlon	Standing Order	Salary	Agreed salary	20 th of the month
Meopham PCC	Standing Order	Office Rent	£544 per month	20 th of the month
HMRC	Direct Debit	PAYE Contributions	Agreed PAYE contributions	Variable
ICO	Direct Debit	Data Protection Act 2018	£35	Annual
Business Stream	Direct Debit	Drinking Fountain Water	Variable	N/A
Lloyds Bank (Multi-pay card)	Direct Debit	Multi-pay card charge	£3.00 per month x 2	N/A