

## Reviewed Council Documents

As part of preparation for the Annual Audit the Clerk has reviewed the Parish Council's policies and procedures as listed below:

Document	Last Adopted	Appendix	Changes
Asset Valuation Policy	September 2021	A	None
Complaints Procedure	May 2021	B	Substantial Revision – Note Tracked Changes
Data Protection Policy	May 2021	C	Complete substitution with revised policy based on SLCC model document * based on advice in Internal Audit Report
Dispensation of s.106 Agreement – Housing Allocations	July 2021	D	No change
Document Retention Policy	May 2021	E	Replace intro paragraphs with more detailed policy based on SLCC model. No change to List of Documents now attached as Appendix
Estates Committee Terms of Reference	May 2021	F	Substantial Review shown by tracked changes to incorporate advice and best practice from SLCC & Thurston PC
Equal Opportunities Policy	May 2021	G	Replace with more detailed policy based on SLCC model
Financial Regulations	May 2021	H	Changes to Contract Values as advised by NALC LTN87
Grant Awarding Policy	November '21	I	No change
Health & Safety Policy	May '21	J	No change
Media Policy	May 2021	K	No change
Publication Scheme	May 2021	L	Minor additions
Requests for Information Policy (FOI)	May 2021	M	No change
Reserves Policy	March 2021	N	No change
Risk Management Policy	January 2022	O	No change
Safeguarding Policy	September 2021	P	No change
Social Media Policy	May 2021	Q	No change
Standing Orders		R	Changes to Contract Values as advised by NALC LTN87
Training Policy	May 2021	S	Complete Revision based on SLCC model & Thurston PC

Proposed amendments are identified above.

### Recommendation:

**That the Council adopts the reviewed Council documents listed above for publication.**

Hilary Workman  
Clerk & RFO  
May 2022

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## Complaints Procedure

### 1. The Importance of Complaints

1. Wickhambrook Parish Council believes that a complaints procedure demonstrates to its parishioners and other contacts that the Council:
  - wishes to provide a good service
  - values feedback
  - undertakes its business in an open and honest manner, and
  - wishes to deal with complaints fairly.
2. Complaints are valuable because they provide a chance to put things right if there has been an error, and to make sure that the same mistake is not repeated.
3. Complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving services and performance. As such, it is essential that complaints are dealt with positively. The Parish Council is anxious to hear people's comments and is committed to making full use of complaints information to contribute to continuous service improvement. Important information about areas for improvement can be obtained both from a single complaint and from patterns of complaints, highlighted by detailed monitoring.

### 2. Definition of a Complaint

2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Parish Council or its staff which affects an individual customer or group of customers.

#### 2.2 What the complaints procedure will deal with: -

The complaints procedure will deal with matters of maladministration, which is if the Parish Council does something the wrong way, fails to do something it should do or does something it should not do. Some examples include:

- neglect or unjustified delay
- malice, bias, or unfair discrimination
- failure to tell people their rights
- failure to provide advice or information when reasonably requested
- providing misleading or inaccurate advice
- inefficiency, ineffectiveness, bad and unprofessional practice or conduct.

#### 2.3 What the complaints procedure will not deal with: -

- complaints for which there is a legal remedy or where legal proceedings already exist.
- complaints about employment matters

### 3. Equal Opportunities

3.1 The Town Council is committed to equal opportunities. Complaints feedback will be used to highlight discriminatory practices, and to promote equality of opportunity.

3.2 Complaints by members of the public of discrimination and/or harassment against the Town Council will be dealt with through the complaints procedure unless it is a complaint that should be dealt with through a statutory procedure.

### 4. Complaints Officer

4.1 The Complaints Officer for the Town Council is the Town Clerk. Their main duties are:

(i) The day to day operation and management of the procedure, including providing a reference point for staff queries on informal complaints.

(ii) To oversee, and undertake where necessary, the investigation of formal complaints at the first stage, within the relevant time scales.

(iii) To maintain a record of all complaints received including details of the nature of the complaint,

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

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# Wickhambrook Parish Council

action taken, outcome, and time taken to resolve.

(iv) To identify improvement points arising from any complaints.

(v) To identify staff training issues.

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## **5. Stages of The Procedure**

5.1 The stages of the procedure are designed to provide the complainant with a thorough and fair means of redress and to provide a framework for officers to work within. However, there may be occasions when a complainant makes an approach in a different manner and it is important that the procedure does not in itself become a barrier to effective communication.

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## **5.2 Everyday problems, queries and comments**

The Council receives queries, problems and comments as part of its day to day running, and they should not all be regarded as complaints. These are routine and expected and are generally resolved quickly to the customer's satisfaction.

If someone is dissatisfied with the original service or response they received and wishes to take the matter further then the issue should be recognised as a complaint.

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## **5.3 Informal Complaint**

During the course of daily business, minor complaints are made to officers about the services we provide. These will usually be dealt with by the relevant officer as appropriate. It is not appropriate for every comment to be treated as a formal complaint. Every effort should be made to deal with these problems immediately, either by providing information, instigating the appropriate action or explaining a decision.

## **5.4 Formal Complaint (First Stage)**

A customer may wish to make a formal complaint directly, or may be unsatisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint and may wish to take the matter further. This will be recorded as a complaint and passed to the Town Clerk to investigate. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the response, they should be informed of their right to take the matter further.

Timescales

Acknowledgement - by return of post

Investigation completed - 14 days

or Progress Reports Issued - 14 day intervals

Investigating Officer: Town Clerk

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## **5.5 Review of Investigation and Complaint (Second Stage)**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Town Clerk's response, they should be advised of their right to have the complaint referred to the Councillors' Panel who will review the complaint.

Timescales

Response by the Town Clerk - 14 days

Panel (if thought necessary) - Convened within 14 days

Review completed - 14 days thereafter

Investigating Officer: Town Clerk

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## **5.6 Councillors' Panel**

If the issue still remains unresolved, the complainant should be notified of his or her right to have the matter referred to a panel consisting of the Chair, (or the Vice Chair, if the complaint refers to the Chair), and two other Councillors appointed by the Council who have not had previous involvement with the complaint or are referred to in the complaint. There will also be a note-taker.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

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~~nominated by the panel, who will also not have had previous involvement in the complaint.  
The outcome of all formal complaints dealt with by the panel will be advised to the Council.~~

## ~~5.7 Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints~~

~~There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should or has been taken.~~

~~These matters should be referred to the Town Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. They may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken in response to the complainant, and inform the complainant so, making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.~~

## ~~5.8 Anonymous Complaints~~

~~Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Town Clerk, and may be acted on at their discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.~~

## ~~6 Resolution and Remedies~~

~~The aim in dealing with all complaints is to reach a resolution or remedy that satisfies the complainant, whether it is the remedy they were originally seeking or not. Where a complaint is found to be at all justified, consideration may need to be given to the question of an appropriate remedy. An explanation or an apology will always be needed.~~

## ~~7 Contact~~

### ~~Pre-Meeting procedure~~

- ~~1. The Complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.~~
- ~~2. If the Complainant indicates that they do not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to address the complaint to the Chairman of the Council.~~
- ~~3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the written complaint and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the council within one week of its receipt.~~
- ~~4. The Complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.~~
- ~~5. The Complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting not less than seven clear working days prior to the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the Complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.~~

### ~~3. Meeting procedure~~

- ~~1. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.~~
- ~~2. The Chairman will introduce everyone.~~

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## Wickhambrook Parish Council

- ~~3.—The Chairman will explain the complaints procedure.~~
  - ~~4.—The Complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint.~~
  - ~~5.—Members to ask any question of the Complainant.~~
  - ~~6.— If relevant, the Clerk will explain the Council's position.~~
  - ~~7.—Members to ask any question of the Clerk.~~
  - ~~8.—The Clerk and Complainant, in this order, will be offered opportunity of last word.~~
  - ~~9.—The Clerk and Complainant (or representative) will be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary both parties will be invited back).~~
  - ~~10.—The Clerk and Complainant (or representative) will return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.~~
- 4.—Post Meeting procedure**
- ~~1.—Within seven working days the Council will confirm its decision in writing to the Complainant together with details of any action to be taken.~~

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<sup>4</sup>Complaints about an employee of the council (i.e. the clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. Complaints received from the clerk about the parish council should be handled in accordance with current advice issued by ACAS. When the parish council has an issue with the clerk there is a set procedure for handling discipline at work.

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## **WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL**

### **INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

In order to conduct its business, services and duties, Wickhambrook Parish Council processes a wide range of data, relating to its own operations and some which it handles on behalf of partners. In broad terms, this data can be classified as:

- Data shared in the public arena about the services it offers, its mode of operations and other information it is required to make available to the public.
- Confidential information and data not yet in the public arena such as ideas or policies that are being worked up.
- Confidential information about other organisations because of commercial sensitivity.
- Personal data concerning its current, past and potential employees, Councillors, and volunteers.
- Personal data concerning individuals who contact it for information, to access its services or facilities or to make a complaint.

Wickhambrook Parish Council will adopt procedures and manage responsibly, all data which it handles and will respect the confidentiality of both its own data and that belonging to partner organisations it works with and members of the public. In some cases, it will have contractual obligations towards confidential data, but in addition will have specific legal responsibilities for personal and sensitive information under data protection legislation.

The Parish Council will periodically review and revise this policy in the light of experience, comments from data subjects and guidance from the Information Commissioners Office.

The Council will be as transparent as possible about its operations and will work closely with public, community and voluntary organisations. Therefore, in the case of all information which is not personal or confidential, it will be prepared to make it available to partners and members of the Parish's communities. Details of information which is routinely available is contained in the Council's Publication Scheme which is based on the statutory model publication scheme for local councils.

#### **Protecting Confidential or Sensitive Information**

Wickhambrook Parish Council recognises it must at times, keep and process sensitive and personal information about both employees and the public, it has therefore adopted this policy not only to meet its legal obligations but to ensure high standards.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which became law on 25th May 2018 and will like the the Data Protection Act 1998 before them, seek to strike a balance between the rights of individuals and the sometimes, competing interests of those such as the Parish Council with legitimate reasons for using personal information.

The policy is based on the premise that Personal Data must be:

- Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on. Next review by May 2023.

- Kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

#### **Data Protection Terminology**

**Data subject** - means the person whose personal data is being processed. That may be an employee, prospective employee, associate or prospective associate of BTC or someone transacting with it in some way, or an employee, Member or volunteer with one of our clients, or persons transacting or contracting with one of our clients when we process data for them.

**Personal data** - means any information relating to a natural person or data subject that can be used directly or indirectly to identify the person. It can be anything from a name, a photo, and an address, date of birth, an email address, bank details, and posts on social networking sites or a computer IP address.

**Sensitive personal data** - includes information about racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, and religious or other beliefs, trade union membership, medical information, sexual orientation, genetic and biometric data or information related to offences or alleged offences where it is used to uniquely identify an individual.

**Data controller** - means a person who (either alone or jointly or in common with other persons) (e.g. Parish Council, employer, council) determines the purposes for which and the manner in which any personal data is to be processed.

**Data processor** - in relation to personal data, means any person (other than an employee of the data controller) who processes the data on behalf of the data controller.

**Processing information or data** - means obtaining, recording or holding the information or data or carrying out any operation or set of operations on the information or data, including:

- organising, adapting or altering it
- retrieving, consulting or using the information or data
- disclosing the information or data by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making it available
- aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the information or data. regardless of the Technology used.

Wickhambrook Parish Council processes personal data in order to:

- fulfil its duties as an employer by complying with the terms of contracts of employment, safeguarding the employee and maintaining information required by law.
- pursue the legitimate interests of its business and its duties as a public body, by fulfilling contractual terms with other organisations, and maintaining information required by law.
- monitor its activities including the equality and diversity of its activities
- fulfil its duties in operating the business premises including security
- assist regulatory and law enforcement agencies
- process information including the recording and updating details about its Councillors, ployees, partners and volunteers.
- process information including the recording and updating details about individuals who contact it for information, or to access a service, or make a complaint.

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- undertake surveys, censuses and questionnaires to fulfil the objectives and purposes of the Council.
- undertake research, audit and quality improvement work to fulfil its objects and purposes.
- carry out Council administration.

Where appropriate and governed by necessary safeguards we will carry out the above processing jointly with other appropriate bodies from time to time.

**The Council will ensure that at least one of the following conditions is met for personal information to be considered fairly processed:**

- The individual has consented to the processing
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract or agreement with the individual
- Processing is required under a legal obligation
- Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual
- Processing is necessary to carry out public functions
- Processing is necessary in order to pursue the legitimate interests of the data controller or third parties.

Particular attention is paid to the processing of any **sensitive personal information** and the Parish Council will ensure that at least one of the following conditions is met:

- Explicit consent of the individual
- Required by law to process the data for employment purposes
- A requirement in order to protect the vital interests of the individual or another person

Who is responsible for protecting a person's personal data?  
 The Parish Council as a corporate body has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection legislation. The Council has delegated this responsibility day to day to the Parish Clerk.

- Email: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk
- Phone: 07508 039810
- Correspondence: Parish Clerk, 123 York Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3EG

**Diversity Monitoring**

Wickhambrook Parish Council monitors the diversity of its employees, and councillors, in order to ensure that there is no inappropriate or unlawful discrimination in the way it conducts its activities. It undertakes similar data handling in respect of prospective employees. This data will always be treated as confidential. It will only be accessed by authorised individuals within the Council and will not be disclosed to any other bodies or individuals. Diversity information will never be used as selection criteria and will not be made available to others involved in the recruitment process.

Anonymised data derived from diversity monitoring may be used for monitoring purposes and may be published and passed to other bodies.

The Council will always give guidance on personnel data to employees, councillors, partners and volunteers through a Privacy Notice and ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on. Next review by May 2023.



Appropriate technical and organisational measures will be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Areas unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

### **Information provided to us**

The information provided (personal information such as name, address, email address, phone number) will be processed and stored so that it is possible for us to contact, respond to or conduct the transaction requested by the individual. By transacting with Wickhambrook Parish Council, individuals are deemed to be giving consent for their personal data provided to be used and transferred in accordance with this policy, however where ever possible specific written consent will be sought. It is the responsibility of those individuals to ensure that the Parish Council is able to keep their personal data accurate and up-to-date. The personal information will be not shared or provided to any other third party or be used for any purpose other than that for which it was provided.

### **The Councils Right to Process Information**

General Data Protection Regulations (and Data Protection Act) Article 6 (1) (a) (b) and (e)

Processing is with consent of the data subject, or

Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.

Processing is necessary for the legitimate interests of the Council.

### **Information Security**

The Parish Council cares to ensure the security of personal data. We make sure that your information is protected from unauthorised access, loss, manipulation, falsification, destruction or unauthorised disclosure. This is done through appropriate technical measures and appropriate policies.

We will only keep your data for the purpose it was collected for and only for as long as is necessary, after which it will be deleted.

### **Children**

We will not process any data relating to a child (under 13) without the express parental/guardian consent of the child concerned.

### **Rights of a DataSubject**

**Access to Information:** an individual has the right to request access to the information we have on them. They can do this by contacting our Parish Clerk

**Information Correction:** If they believe that the information we have about them is incorrect, they may contact us so that we can update it and keep their data accurate. Please contact Parish Clerk – [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

**Information Deletion:** If the individual wishes the Parish Council to delete the information about them, they can do so by contacting the Parish Clerk.

**Right to Object:** If an individual believes their data is not being processed for the purpose it has been collected for, they may object by contacting the Parish Clerk The Parish Council does not use automated decision making or profiling of individual personal data.

**Complaints:** If an individual has a complaint regarding the way their personal data

has been processed, they may make a complaint to the Parish Clerk, or the Information Commissioners Office [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)  
Tel: 0303 123 1113.

The Council will ensure that individuals on whom personal information is kept are aware of their rights and have easy access to that information on request.

#### Making Information Available

The Publication Scheme is a means by which the Council can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local people to take an interest in the work of the Council and its role within the community.

In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Scheme specifies the classes of information which the Council publishes or intends to publish. It is supplemented with an Information Guide which will give greater detail of what the Council will make available and hopefully make it easier for people to access it.

All formal meetings of Council and its committees are subject to statutory notice being given on notice boards, the Website and sent to the local media. The Council publishes an annual programme in May each year. All formal meetings are open to the public and press and reports to those meetings and relevant background papers are available for the public to see. The Council welcomes public participation and has a public participation session on each Council and committee meeting. Details can be seen in the Council's Standing Orders, which are available on its Website.

Occasionally, Council or committees may need to consider matters in private. Examples of this are matters involving personal details of staff, or a particular member of the public, or where details of commercial/contractual sensitivity are to be discussed. This will only happen after a formal resolution has been passed to exclude the press and public and reasons for the decision are stated. Minutes from all formal meetings, including the confidential parts are public documents.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 requires written records to be made of certain decisions taken by officers under delegated powers. These are not routine operational and administrative decisions such as giving instructions to the workforce or paying an invoice approved by Council, but would include urgent action taken after consultation with the Chairman, such as responding to a planning application in advance of Council. In other words, decisions which would have been made by Council or committee had the delegation not been in place.

The 2014 Regulations also amend the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to allow the public or press to film, photograph or make an audio recording of council and committee meetings normally open to the public. The Council will where possible facilitate such recording unless it is being disruptive. It will also take steps to ensure that children, the vulnerable and members of the public who object to being filmed are protected without undermining the broader purpose of the meeting.

The Council endeavour to make special arrangements on request for persons who do not have English as their first language or those with hearing or sight difficulties.

#### Disclosure Information

The Council will as necessary undertake checks on both staff and Members with the the Disclosure and Barring Service and will comply with their Code of Conduct relating to the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information.

### **Data Transparency**

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on. Next review by May 2023.

The Council has resolved to act in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (September 2011). This sets out the key principles for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of public data and is intended to help them meet obligations of the legislative framework concerning information.

“Public data” means the objective, factual data on which policy decisions are based and on which public services are assessed, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery.

The Code will therefore underpin the Council’s decisions on the release of public data and ensure it is proactive in pursuing higher standards and responding to best practice as it develops.

The principles of the Code are:

**Demand led:** new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability

**Open:** the provision of public data will be integral to the Council’s engagement with residents so that it drives accountability to them.

**Timely:** data will be published as soon as possible following production.

Government has also issued a further Code of Recommended Practice on Transparency, compliance of which is compulsory for parish councils with turnover (gross income or gross expenditure) not exceeding £25,000 per annum. These councils will be exempt from the requirement to have an external audit from April 2017. Wickhambrook Parish Council exceeds this turnover but will never-the-less seek to ensure the following information is published on its Website for ease of access:

- All transactions above £500.
- End of year accounts
- Annual Governance Statements
- Internal Audit Reports
- List of Councillor or Member responsibilities
- Details of public land and building assets
- Draft minutes of Council and committees within one month
- Agendas and associated papers no later than three clear days before the meeting.

## Policy for Considering Requests for Dispensation of S106 Agreement in Respect of Housing Allocations

The clerk to the parish council will only refer a request to the next parish council meeting for a dispensation under s.106 for housing allocation(s) where:

1. The housing association confirm that any and all parties to the proposed exchange have supplied all necessary and sufficient information on which the housing association may reach its decision; and
2. The housing association has supplied to the parish council a summary of the proposed exchange advising whether or not it supports the proposal, and its reasons
3. Parties to the exchange confirm their assent to the publication of any identifying information, or clearly state which identifying information they wish to have redacted from:
  - a. Public documents
  - b. Any documents circulated to councillors

Where all necessary information is received not later than 7 working days before the next scheduled meeting, a report (which is a public document) will be prepared, summarising:

- The proposed exchange
- The support (or otherwise) of the housing association and its reasons

which will be circulated to parish councillors with the Summons (agenda) not later than 3 clear days before the meeting. The report (including any redacted identifying information) will also be published to the parish council website.

All parties to the proposed exchange, and the relevant housing association officer, will be invited to the parish council meeting, receive a copy of the agenda and the report, and have an opportunity to speak at the meeting.

The parish council, on reaching a determination, will give reasons for its decision, and the decision will be advised in writing.

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## Document Retention and Disposal Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of document.
- 1.2 Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.
- 1.3 Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.
- 1.4 It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.
- 1.5 In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

### 2. Scope and Objectives of the Policy

2.1 The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of – and if so by what method.

2.2 There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value. Unimportant records of information include:

- 'With compliments' slips.
- Catalogues and trade journals.
- Non-acceptance of invitations.
- Trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to Council business.
- Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
- Out of date distribution lists.

2.3 Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports may be destroyed.

2.4 Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to be disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

3.1 Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation at least on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.

3.2 Councils should ensure that all employees are aware of the retention/disposal schedule.

This policy was reviewed at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on .... Next review by May 2023

#### 4. Document Retention Protocol

4.1 Councils should have in place an adequate system for documenting the activities of their service. This system should take into account the legislative and regulatory environments to which they work.

4.2 Records of each activity should be complete and accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:

- Facilitate an audit or examination of the business by anyone so authorised.
- Protect the legal and other rights of the Council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
- Verify individual consent to record, manage and record disposal of their personal data.
- Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.

4.3 To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:

- Records created and maintained should be arranged in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information under the General Data Protection Regulations
- Documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining should be placed at the records office.

4.4 The retention schedules in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention or Disposal provide guidance on the recommended minimum retention periods for specific classes of documents and records. These schedules have been compiled from recommended best practice from the Public Records Office, the Records Management Society of Great Britain and in accordance with relevant legislation.

4.5 Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

#### 5. Document Disposal Protocol

5.1 Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:

- Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
- Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?
- Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
- Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?

5.2 When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned. A record of the disposal will be kept to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations.

5.3 Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:

- Non-confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.
- Confidential records or records giving personal information: shred documents.
- Deletion of computer records.
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

5.4 The following principles should be followed when disposing of records:

- All records containing personal or confidential information should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. Failure to do so could lead to the Council being prosecuted under the General Data Protection Regulations.
- the Freedom of Information Act or cause reputational damage.
- Where computer records are deleted steps should be taken to ensure that data is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner.
- Where documents are of historical interest it may be appropriate that they are transmitted to the County Records office.
- Back-up copies of documents should also be destroyed (including electronic or photographed documents unless specific provisions exist for their disposal).

This policy was reviewed at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on .... Next review by May 2023

5.5 Records should be maintained of appropriate disposals. These records should contain the following information:

- The name of the document destroyed.
- The date the document was destroyed.
- The method of disposal.

## **6. Data Protection Act 1998 – Obligation to Dispose of Certain Data**

6.1 The Data Protection Act 1998 ('Fifth Principle') requires that personal information must not be retained longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally obtained.

Section 1 of the Data Protection Act defines personal information as:

Data that relates to a living individual who can be identified:

- a) from the data, or
- b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller.

It includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the

Council or other person in respect of the individual.

6.2 The Data Protection Act provides an exemption for information about identifiable living individuals that is held for research, statistical or historical purposes to be held indefinitely provided that the specific requirements are met.

6.3 Councils are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the principles of the under the General Data Protection Regulations namely:

- Personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met.
- Personal data shall only be obtained for specific purposes and processed in a compatible manner.
  - Personal data shall be adequate, relevant, but not excessive.
  - Personal data shall be accurate and up to date.
  - Personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary.
  - Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject.
  - Personal data shall be kept secure.

6.4 External storage providers or archivists that are holding Council documents must also comply with the above principles of the General Data Protection Regulations.

## **7. Scanning of Documents**

7.1 In general once a document has been scanned on to a document image system the original becomes redundant. There is no specific legislation covering the format for which local government records are retained following electronic storage, except for those prescribed by HM Revenue and Customs.

7.2 As a general rule hard copies of scanned documents should be retained for three months after scanning.

7.3 Original documents required for VAT and tax purposes should be retained for six years unless a shorter period has been agreed with HM Revenue and Customs.

## **8. Review of Document Retention**

8.1 It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document on a regular basis (at least every three years in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued by the Lord Chancellor).

8.2 This document has been compiled from various sources of recommended best practice and with reference to the following documents and publications:

- Local Council Administration, Charles Arnold-Baker, 910h edition, Chapter 11
- NALC LTN 40 – Local Councils' Documents and Records, January 2013
- NALC LTN 37 – Freedom of Information, July 2009

This policy was reviewed at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on .... Next review by May 2023

- Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

## **9. List of Documents**

9.1 The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention and Disposal. This is updated regularly in accordance with any changes to legal requirements.

This policy was reviewed at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on .... Next review by May 2023

[parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)



## Appendix A

## List of Documents for Retention and Disposal.

Document/record	Minimum Retention Period
<b>Administration</b>	
Signed minutes of council meetings	Indefinite- archive
Councillors Declarations of Office	Term of office plus two years
Correspondence and papers on important local issues or activities	Indefinite - archive
Quotations & tenders for works	7 years
Title deeds, Leases, Agreements & Contracts	Indefinite
Routine correspondence, papers & e-mails	Retain as related to the subject, or as long as useful
Personnel records, salary, PAYE	7 years after ceasing employment
Planning applications & related papers refused	Retain until appeal period has expired
Planning applications & related papers granted	Retain until development has been completed
Employers Liability Insurance Certificate	Indefinite
Insurance policies and correspondence claims	Whilst valid
<b>Finance</b>	
Receipt and payments accounts / Audits/Returns	Indefinite - archive
Bank Statements	7 years
Bank Paying in Book & Cheque book	Last completed audit
Paid Invoices	7 years
VAT Records	7 years
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Reports, Guides, Handbooks etc received from other bodies	Retain as long as useful
General Correspondence	Retain as long as useful

This policy was reviewed at the May 2021 Parish Council Meeting and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on .... Next review by May 2023

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

### Estates Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. ~~Name~~ Purpose of the Committee

The Committee shall be called the Wickhambrook Parish Council Estates Committee.

The committee is established to manage, maintain and improve the sports and recreational facilities on behalf of the Parish Council,

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#### 2. Appointment of the Committee

The Committee shall be appointed by the Parish Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

#### 3. Membership of the Committee

The Committee shall be comprised of

- three members of the Parish Council with a Chairman who will be elected annually at the Statutory Annual Meeting of the Parish Council; and
- four other (non voting) members

~~three Parish Councillors and four other members.~~

In accordance with Standing Order 4 d)v, two substitute members to the Estates Committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members where they have confirmed to the Proper Officer three (3) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend shall have been appointed by the Parish Council.

The Committee may appoint a Vice-Chairperson.

Both Chair-person (appointed by Parish Council) and vice-chair person shall be Parish Councillors.

The committee is to comprise a minimum of:

#### 4. ~~7.~~ Quorum

Three committee members, of whom two shall be Parish Councillors, shall form a quorum for all meetings of the committee.

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The quorum for a sub committee or advisory committee shall be determined when the sub-committee is established.

Three members of the Committee (two councillors, and one other) will constitute a quorum.

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#### 5. Meetings:

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

Meetings to occur as a minimum of one per quarter or subject to any matters that may require attention or discussion. Such meetings will be scheduled for the year and called by the Parish Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council.

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Minutes of all meetings will be recorded by the Clerk (or any member nominated at the meeting if the clerk is unable to attend).

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The Council's Standing Orders on the rules of debate (except those relating to standing and to speaking more than once) and the Standing Order on interest of members in contracts and other matters will apply to this committee.

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If the numbers of the Councillors present (not including those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum the meeting shall be adjourned, and any such business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chairman shall arrange.

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### **2. ~~5~~ Objects Responsibilities of the Committee**

5.1 To keep under review the provision of the sports, recreational and parish lands for the residents of Wickhambrook, as below: Working as a Committee of the Parish Council to oversee the maintenance and development of:

- The Cemetery, including the surrounding hedgerows and the chapel
- The Six Acres, including the bottom and side banks
- The Village Greens
- The Children's Playgrounds on the Recreation Ground and at Bury Road
- The Churchyard, on behalf of the Borough Council

• To ensure monthly inspection sheets are completed and submitted to the Clerk for the above areas, highlighting remedial action required.

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5.2 To ensure that annual safety inspections are carried out to meet legal requirements for the above spaces.

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5.3 To lead on and approve tenders for all aspects of maintenance and ground works for these areas in accordance with the Parish Council's financial regulations.

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5.4 To manage use of the Parish Council's recreational grounds

5.5 To advise the Parish Council of the impact of proposals by owners or occupiers of land that may affect its recreational and sports facilities.

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5.6 To review and set the level of the annual fees for use of the Cemetery

5.7 To review and recommend regulations for the Parish Council's Cemetery

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5.8 To work in partnership with the Safer Neighbourhood Team to alleviate anti-social behaviour and vandalism in/on the Parish Council's sports and recreational facilities.

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5.9 To work in partnership with appropriate funding bodies to improve the Parish Council's recreational and sports facilities.

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## Wickhambrook Parish Council

~~5.10 To put forward to the Parish Council, proposals for any improvements, developments or any capital expenditure when requesting funding for, the following year.~~

~~5.11 To prepare an annual report to summarise the work undertaken in the exercising of its delegated powers for consideration by the Parish Council.~~

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### ~~3.1. Appointment of the Committee~~

~~The Committee shall be appointed by the Parish Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.~~

### ~~4.1. Membership of the Committee~~

~~The Committee shall be comprised of three Parish Councillors and four other members.~~

~~In accordance with Standing Order 4 d)v, two substitute members to the Estates Committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members where they have confirmed to the Proper Officer three (3) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend shall have been appointed by the Parish Council.~~

~~The Committee may appoint a Vice Chairperson.~~

~~Both Chair person (appointed by Parish Council) and vice chair person shall be Parish Councillors.~~

### ~~5.6. Sub-committees~~

~~The Committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees. Any sub-committee appointed shall include at least three Parish Councillors.~~

~~The Committee shall have the power to appoint advisory committees.~~

### ~~6. Meetings~~

~~The Committee shall meet for a minimum of four times a year. All meetings shall be publicly advertised and shall be open to the public.~~

### ~~7. Quorum~~

~~Three committee members, of whom two shall be Parish Councillors, shall form a quorum for all meetings of the committee.~~

~~The quorum for a sub-committee or advisory committee shall be determined when the sub-committee is established.~~

### ~~87. Procedures~~

~~The Committee and any appointed sub-committee shall be subject to all statutory procedures and Standing Orders as are applicable to the Parish Council.~~

### ~~98. Voting Rights~~

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

Members of the committee or of appointed sub-committees who are not Parish Councillors shall be non-voting members in accordance with Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

All members of appointed advisory committees shall have equal voting rights. The Chairperson shall have a casting vote on all committees.

### **~~109~~. Financial**

Expenditure by the Committee shall be within limits set by the Parish Council. No expenditure or commitments beyond these limits without the prior approval of the Parish Council by resolution at a properly constituted Parish Council meeting. All expenditure shall be subject to formal resolution and to a simple majority vote of the Parish Council members of the Committee. Orders for approved work shall be placed in the name of and be invoiced to the Parish Council.

### **~~110~~. Records**

Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the committee and of any sub-committee or advisory committee. The minutes of each meeting of the Committee shall be presented at the subsequent Parish Council meeting.

All correspondence and quotations relating to the work of the Committee or sub-committee must be kept and shall be made available to the Parish Council as required. Records of all expenditure must be kept and shall be presented to the Parish Council as required.

### **~~113~~. Variation**

The terms of reference shall be as defined by the Parish Council and no alteration shall be made other than by resolution of the Parish Council.

**~~These terms of reference approved by resolution of the Parish Council on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (Min.Ref 19.05.6.2.3)~~**

**~~Review date: By May 2020~~**

# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1) Introduction

i) Wickhambrook Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

ii) We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

iii) The parish council has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

iv) All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Parish Council.

v) Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Parish Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with the parish council, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Parish Council.

## 2) Our Commitment as an Employer

i) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.

ii) Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

iii) Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.

iv) Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

v) We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

## 3) Our Commitment as a Service Provider

i) We aim to provide services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class.

ii) We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.

iii) This policy is fully supported by the parish council.

iv) This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

v) We have clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to

raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.  
vi) Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

#### **4) Equal Opportunity Policy Statements**

##### **AGE**

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

##### **DISABILITY**

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of: loop systems; Braille facilities; alternative formatting; and sign language interpretation.

##### **RACE**

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Parish Council.

##### **GENDER**

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men and non-binary individuals;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women, men and non-binary individuals;
- offer equal access for women, men and non-binary individuals to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

##### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of LGBTQ members of society and promote positive images of them; and

##### **RELIGION OR BELIEF**

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

##### **PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY**

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

##### **MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP**

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is

promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

#### **EX-OFFENDERS**

We will:

- prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

#### **EQUAL PAY**

We will:

- ensure that all employees, male or female or non-binary, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.



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**Wickhambrook Parish Council****FINANCIAL REGULATIONS ENGLAND****1. GENERAL**

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders<sup>1</sup> and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
  - acts under the policy direction of the council;
  - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;

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<sup>1</sup> Model standing orders for councils are available in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils

**Wickhambrook Parish Council**

- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
  - approving accounting statements;
  - approving an annual governance statement;
  - borrowing;
  - writing off bad debts;

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
  - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,
- shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

## 2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

**Wickhambrook Parish Council**

- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
  - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
  - initiate or approve accounting 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.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

**3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING**

- 3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than **October**, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.
- 3.2. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.3. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.4. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

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### 4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £5,000;
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £1000; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. To spend up to £1000 in situations where (s)he considers such expenditure to be justified after consultation with the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee. Such authority is to be evidenced by a Minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed.

4.7. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.8. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4.9. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 15% of the budget.

- 4.10. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

### 5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.2. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.3. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available council meeting.
- 5.4. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk and RFO 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. An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council; or
  - b) 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.
- 5.5. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

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- 5.6. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.7. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.
- 5.8. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.9. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.10. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

### **6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS**

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council.
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee shall be signed by two members of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

**These Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted by Wickhambrook Parish Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and are scheduled for review May 2021.**

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- 6.8. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The RFO may maintain a petty cash imprest balance of £50 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
  - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash amount but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
  - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

**7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
  - b) by the internal auditor;
  - c) by the external auditor; or
  - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.4. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.5. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

**These Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted by Wickhambrook Parish Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and are scheduled for review May 2021.**

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7.7. Before employing interim staff the council must consider a full business case.

**8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS**

8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.

8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

8.3. The council will arrange with the council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk or RFO.

8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.

8.5. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

8.6. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

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

8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

**9. INCOME**

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

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

9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least bi-annually, following a report of the Clerk.

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

9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

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

**These Financial Regulations were reviewed and adopted by Wickhambrook Parish Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and are scheduled for review May 2021.**

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- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

**10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES**

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

**11. CONTRACTS**

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
    - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
    - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
    - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
    - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
    - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and

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- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations<sup>2</sup>.
- c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)<sup>3</sup>.
- d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f. 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.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders, <sup>4</sup> 18a(v) and 18c and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £1000 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.
- i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that 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, provided that the specification does not change, 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.

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<sup>2</sup> The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

<sup>3</sup> Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts **£213,477**
- b. For public works contracts **£5,336,937**

<sup>4</sup> Based on NALC's model standing order 18d in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils

**Wickhambrook Parish Council****12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)**

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

**13. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 13.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 13.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

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- 14.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 14.2. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 14.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

**15. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 15.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 15.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

**16. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 16.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 16.2. The council may, by resolution of the council 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 drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

## Grant Awarding Policy

### Introduction to Policy

Wickhambrook Parish Council has statutory powers to make funds available to local organisations for the overall benefit of Wickhambrook and its residents.

This document outlines Wickhambrook Parish Council's guidelines for awarding. It also formalises the application process to ensure access, openness and fairness to the groups and organisations we aim to support. We will ensure that our grant awarding activity is fair and transparent.

A grant is any payment made by the Council to be used by an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish, and which is not directly controlled or administered by the Council. The Council awards grants, at its discretion, to Parish organisations which can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to benefit the Parish by:

- Providing a service
- Enhancing the quality of life
- Improving the environment
- Promoting the Parish of Wonderland in a positive way

### General information for applicants

It is Wickhambrook Parish Council's intention (subject to budget restrictions and available resources) to support initiatives from local community groups and organisations.

Priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received grants from Wickhambrook Parish Council. The size of any grant awarded is at the discretion of the Parish Council but will not generally exceed £500 in any one application.

### Who is eligible to apply

The following organisations may apply to Wickhambrook Parish Council:

- A Wickhambrook based charity
- An organisation serving the needs of the residents of Wickhambrook
- Resident(s) of Wickhambrook requesting grant aid with a project/event, which will be for the benefit of the local community
- A Wickhambrook based club/association/charity serving a specific section of the community or the community as a whole
- A local branch of a regional or national organisation/group which serves the needs of the residents of Wickhambrook.

### Who is not eligible to apply

We will normally reject applications from:

- Projects which are the prime statutory responsibility of other government bodies who would normally be funded by a local or regional authority
- Projects which improve or benefit privately owned land or property
- Support for individuals or private business projects
- Applications by "for profit" commercial organisations

- From regional and national organisations unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the grant would be used specifically for the residents served by Wickhambrook Parish Council
- From organisations with political affiliations or those established for the purpose of forwarding a party-political agenda
- Applications from organisations or for purposes which parish councils are specifically excluded by law from supporting.

Priority will be given to those applications submitted early in the financial year (which runs from April to March), however the Parish Council reserves the right to delay considering applications, funding dependent, until the end of the financial year.

### **What can be funded**

The project should be something which will:

- make the local community a better place to live, work and play
- provide a long lasting and sustainable benefit to our local area
- improve the social, environmental and /or economic profile of Wickhambrook.

Priority will be given to those applications which add value over applications for running costs.

### **The following are unlikely to be considered as a grant priority**

Projects where there is a large shortfall in the funding required to complete the project or projects that simply replace existing facilities with no significant improvement.

### **Grant Application Process**

Please complete and submit the Small Grant Application form to:

The Clerk, Mrs Hilary Workman  
123 York Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 3EG, or e-mail to [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

All questions on the application form should be fully answered and additional appropriate information, which supports an application, should be provided.

In addition to the application form organisations will be required to provide the following supporting information:

- a copy of their written constitution or details of their aims and purpose
- full details of the project or activity
- demonstration that the grant will be of benefit to the local community within the Parish
- the proportion or number of beneficiaries living in the electoral area
- demonstration of a clear need for the funding
- a copy of the previous years accounts or, for new initiatives, a detailed budget and business plan.

Please submit to the Clerk any expression of interest for a possible grant application exceeding £100 by 30 September of the financial year prior to the funds being required. This is so that budget provision can be considered. Submission of applications is required by 31 November of the financial year prior to the funds being required.

## **Awarding Grants**

The Council will make the decision on which grants to award. All applicants will be contacted following the Council's decision.

The Council has a limited budget each year and guidance can be given to applicants as to how much money is likely to be available in a specific financial year.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits, with decisions based on the following criteria

- General eligibility
- Impact on key local need
- Community support
- Value for money
- Environmental impact
- Community involvement
- Feasibility
- Likely effectiveness.

Only one application for a grant will be considered from each organisation in any one financial year. Grants will not be made retrospectively.

Ongoing commitments to award grants or subsidies in future years will not be made. A fresh application will be required each year.

## **Conditions of Grant**

The Council may make the award of any grant or subsidy subject to such additional conditions and requirements as it considers appropriate.

The Council reserves the right to refuse any grant application which it considers to be inappropriate or against the objectives of the Council.

Wickhambrook Parish Council support must be acknowledged as appropriate on all publicity and promotional material including posters, advertisements, press releases and leaflets.

Any grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded unless the written approval of the Council has been obtained for a change in use of the grant monies, and that any unspent portion of the grant must be returned to the Council by the end of the financial year in which it was awarded.

Grants must not be distributed to any other organisation and payments will not be made to third parties.

An organisation should have a bank account in its own name with two authorised representatives required to sign each cheque.

The administration of and accounting for any grant shall be the responsibility of the recipient. All awards must be properly accounted for and evidence of expenditure should be supplied to the Council as requested.

The Council may make the award of any grant or subsidy as it considers appropriate in the event of any unforeseen urgent event.

Nothing contained herein shall prevent the Council from exercising, at any time, its existing duty or power in respect of providing financial assistance or grants to local or national organisations under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 137.



WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL  
c/o The Clerk, Mrs H Workman  
123 York Road  
Bury St Edmunds IP33 3EG

Tel: 07508 039810  
e-mail: [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)  
website <https://wickhambrook.org>

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## APPLICATION FOR A GRANT

*Before competing this form, please read carefully the attached document entitled Wickhambrook Grant Awarding Policy. Copies of the form together with the **latest copy of examined accounts** must be submitted along with any supporting documentation requested.*

### **General information for applicants**

*It is Wickhambrook Parish Council's intention (subject to budget restrictions and available resources) to support initiatives from local community groups and organisations. Priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received grants from Wickhambrook Parish Council. The size of any grant awarded is at the discretion of the Parish Council but will generally not exceed £500 in any one application.*

*If you have any queries on the completion of this form please contact the Parish Clerk, Wickhambrook Parish Council, 123 York Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3EG. Email: [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)*

### **Details of Your Organisation:**

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Contact Telephone No.:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Registered Charity No.:</b>	
<b>If you are part of a larger organisation, its name</b>	
<b>Principal aims and objectives:</b>	

**Details of Grant Requested:**

**Explain your need for a grant with the likely number of beneficiaries and their age**

**Profiles:**

**Grant requested: £**

**Details of Other Grants:**

**Received in the last two years:**

**Currently applied for:**

**Please use this space for any significant information about your organisation not already supplied:**

I certify that the foregoing information is accurate to the best of my knowledge

Signature of applicant:

Office Held:

Date:

## Health and Safety Policy

### **General Statement;**

Wickhambrook Parish Council recognizes and accepts its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees, contractors, voluntary helpers and others who may be affected by the activities of the council.

The council will meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and will provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, the resources necessary to fulfill this commitment.

### **Review of policy;**

The policy will be regularly reviewed to determine its effectiveness and to take into account any changes within the parish council or statutory regulations which may affect it. Any weaknesses or recommendations should be referred to the parish council for consideration at the time of the review.

### **Accident Prevention;**

Every employee, whilst at work, has a legal duty of care and will be expected to take reasonable care for the health and safety of him or herself and of other persons who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions.

When necessary the council will seek expert technical advice on health and safety to assist the clerk in fulfilling the council's responsibilities for ensuring safe working conditions.

It is the responsibility of the parish council to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the Clerk's working conditions and practices are safe, any necessary assessments are performed, and all relevant regulations are complied with.

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to the Council, when working from home, to take reasonable care for the safety of persons visiting his/her property.

It is the responsibility of Parish Council to eliminate and or control any potential hazards reported to them and to investigate the cause of any accidents so as to prevent repetition.

Accidents shall be reported to the Clerk who will record them and report to the next Parish Council meeting

It is the responsibility of all subcontractors to be vigilant and have regard for their own and other contractor's or member of the general public's health and safety and to report any potential or actual hazards.

It is the responsibility of Contractors Before being awarded any contract to

- provide evidence of their own £2m. Public Liability insurance cover, including details of insurer, policy number and expiry date.
- provide evidence of being competent to carry out the work, for example have appropriate qualifications, references and experience.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

- confirm that they have their own health and safety policy for their staff.
- provide the following information:
  - Name and address of contractor.
  - Contact details including mobile phone number.
  - Whether registered for VAT.
  - Proposed activity.
  - Risk assessment with details of how the work will be carried out safely.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

# Media Policy

## Introduction

1. Wickhambrook Parish Council ("the Council") is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council's publication scheme, please contact the Council's clerk.
2. The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet ("the media").
3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

## Legal requirements and restrictions

4. This policy is subject to the Council's obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council's standing orders and financial regulations. The Council's financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council's publication scheme.
5. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation or its statutory instruments and regulations, the Council's standing orders, under contract or by common law. Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council's publication scheme.

## Meetings

6. A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.
7. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, the media may speak and ask questions. Public participation is regulated by the Council's standing orders.
8. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enable a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless (i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings or (iii) paragraphs 9 and 10 below apply.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

9. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Council or committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission.
10. Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.
11. The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.
12. The Council's standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a meeting of a subcommittee.

### **Other communications with the media**

13. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.
14. The Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, they will make this clear.
15. The Council's Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.
16. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 5 above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, councillors are free to communicate their position and views.
17. Further advice on the Council's approach to the use of Social Media is set out in its Social Media policy.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

### Information available from Wickhambrook Parish Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<b>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</b>		
This will be current information only		
Who's who on the Council	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (including telephone number and email address)	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
<b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b>		
Limited to current and previous financial years only		
Annual return form	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Annual statutory report by auditor (internal and external)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Finalised budget	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Precept request	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Grants given and received	Website & Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
<b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b>		
Parish Plan (summary document)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines – (none at present)	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions</b>		
Limited to current and previous 2 years only		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
Minutes of meetings (as above)	Website Hard copy – parish notice boards Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free Free 15p per sheet
Reports presented to council meetings	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Responses to planning applications (note these are reported in the minutes)	Available on West Suffolk Planning Portal	15p per sheet

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.



## Wickhambrook Parish Council

	<a href="https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/">https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/</a>	
Bye-laws (none at present)	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
<b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b>		
Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:		
Procedural standing orders Code of Conduct Policy statements	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:		
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
<b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b>		
Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Any publicly available register or list	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
Assets Register	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Disclosure log	Available for inspection – contact Clerk	

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

Register of members' interests	Available on Parish & West Suffolk Websites Available for inspection – contact Clerk	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Available for inspection – contact Clerk	
<b>Class 7 – The services we offer</b>		
Current information only		
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Website (for fees & charges & policies) Available for inspection – contact Clerk	
Play area and recreational facilities	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
Seating, litter bins and memorials.	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Website Hard copy – contact Clerk	Free 15p per sheet
<b>Additional Information</b> This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above		
Members' Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Available for inspection – contact Clerk	
Job descriptions	Hard copy – contact Clerk	15p per sheet

### Requests for Information:

Requests for information should be made to the Parish Clerk:

Hilary Workman

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

[parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

Telephone: 07508 039810  
Post: 123 York Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3EG  
Email: [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org)

**Note that in the above scheme,** for certain classes a limitation on the age of some documents has been stipulated. For the avoidance of doubt this does not mean information beyond that date cannot be obtained, it simply indicates that it is not available as a matter of course within the model publication scheme.

**Charges** will be raised for the provision of copies of the documents or information at 15p per sheet; being the actual cost incurred by the Parish Council to provide each copy. Postage, if required, will be charged at actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2<sup>nd</sup> class post. These charges are adopted for all Freedom of Information requests but those that include information not included in this model publication scheme may be subject to a £25.00 per hour charge for detailed research.

This guide to information available under the Model Publication scheme was adopted by Wickhambrook Parish Council at its Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

Review date: by May 2022

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

[parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## Requests for Information Policy

Wickhambrook Parish Council has an obligation to make information available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. The procedure for dealing with applications is as follows;

**To make a request under the Freedom of Information Act please contact the Parish Council in writing to the Clerk by letter or email ([Wickhambrookclerk@gmail.com](mailto:Wickhambrookclerk@gmail.com)).**

Please ensure to include;

Your full name

Your address and postcode

Your email address and/or telephone number (in case of query)

Details of the information you are requesting. Please be as specific as possible to help reduce the time needed to deal with your request – this could affect any costs that you may incur.

Send your request to

Mrs Hilary Workman  
Parish Clerk  
123 York Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 3EG

Or email [parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

### **Wickhambrook Parish Council will respond by;**

Entering details of your request into its Freedom of Information log book and sending you an acknowledgement.

You will be informed of the date of commencement of the statutory 20 working day period.

You will be advised of the cost that you will need to pay for your request - the payment will be required before the information is provided.

The Parish Council will provide the information you have requested within 20 working days or explain why it is unable to do so.

A request may be refused where;

The request is vexatious or repeated

The cost of complying with the request exceeds the 'appropriate limit'

The information requested falls under one of the exemptions listed in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

[parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk)

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

### RESERVES POLICY

#### 1. Purpose

1.1 Wickhambrook Parish Council (WPC) is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

1.2 Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

1.3 Proper Practices (March 2020 – to be applied to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) - requires all authorities to have regard to the need to put in place a General Reserve Policy and have reviewed the level and purpose of all Earmarked Reserves.

1.4 Furthermore, it is stated that whilst authorities should have sufficient Reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both its day-to-day operations and future plans, it is important, however, given that its funds are generated from taxation/public levies, that such reserves are not excessive.

#### 2. Types of reserves

2.1 Reserves can be categorised as general, earmarked or restricted.

#### 3. General Reserves

3.1 General reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions as to their use. These reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement if necessary or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies.

3.2 The level of general reserves is a matter of judgement and so this policy does not attempt to prescribe a blanket level. The primary means of building general reserves will be through an allocation from the annual budget. This will be in addition to any amounts needed to replenish reserves that have been consumed in the previous year.

3.3 Setting the level of general reserves is one of several related decisions in the formulation of the medium-term financial strategy and the annual budget. The Council must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces, as expressed in its financial risk assessment.

3.4 If in extreme circumstances general reserves were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, the Council would be able to draw down from its earmarked reserves to provide short-term resources.

3.5 Even at times when extreme pressure is put on the council's finances the council it must keep a minimum balance sufficient to pay one month's worth of contractual obligations to staff and contractors in general reserves at all times.

3.6 Council should also be aware of the guidance as given in Proper Practices (March 2020 – to be applied to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) which states that "The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE). NRE (subject to any planned surplus or deficit) is effectively Precept\Levy less any Loan Repayment and/or amounts included in Precept\Levy for Capital Projects and transfers to Earmarked Reserves. The reason for the wide range (3 to 12 months) is to cater for the large

variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months NRE, the larger the authority the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with an NRE in excess of £200,000 should plan on 3 months equivalent General Reserve. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a General Reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size and situation and plan their Budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Changes in activity levels/range of services provided will inevitably lead to changes in the requisite minimum level of General Reserve in order to provide working capital for those activities.

#### **4. Earmarked Reserves**

4.1 Earmarked reserves can be used to cover items such as:

- Renewals – to enable services to plan and finance an effective programme of vehicle and equipment replacement and planned property maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.
- Carry forward of underspend - some services commit expenditure to projects but cannot spend the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.
- Other earmarked reserves may be set up from time to time to meet known or predicted liabilities and may include an insurance reserve to enable the Council to meet the excesses of claims not covered by insurance.
- Earmarked reserves will be established on a “needs” basis, in line with anticipated requirements.
- Any decision to set up a reserve must be given by the Council.
- Expenditure from reserves can only be authorised by the Council.

4.2 Reserves should not be held to fund ongoing expenditure. This would be unsustainable as, at some point, the reserves would be exhausted. To the extent that reserves are used to meet short term funding gaps, they must be replenished in the following year. However, earmarked reserves that have been used to meet a specific liability would not need to be replenished, having served the purpose for which they were originally established.

4.3 All earmarked reserves are recorded on a central schedule held by the Responsible Financial Officer which lists the various earmarked reserves and the purpose for which they are held.

4.4 Reviewing the Council’s Financial Risk Assessment is part of the budgeting and year end accounting procedures and identifies planned and unplanned expenditure items and thereby indicates an appropriate level of Reserves.

#### **5. Restricted Reserves**

5.1 Wickhambrook Parish Council does not currently hold any restricted reserves. One example of a restricted reserve is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which West Suffolk has not yet adopted.

#### **6. Policy In Practice**

6.1 The Council will hold Reserves for these three main purposes: -

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of the General Reserves.
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this also forms part of the General Reserves.
- A means of building up funds (Earmarked Reserves), to meet known or predicted requirements.

## **7. Procedure**

- 7.1 Any decision to set up a reserve must be made by the Council.
- 7.2. Expenditure from reserves can only be authorized by the Council.
- 7.3. The reserves will be reviewed by the Council as part of the annual budgeting process.
- 7.4. The Responsible Financial Officer will maintain a detailed schedule of all reserves which will form part of the accounts package.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document forms Wickhambrook Parish Council's Risk Management Strategy. It sets out:

- What risk management is;
- Why the Parish Council needs a risk management strategy;
- The Parish Council's philosophy on risk management;
- The risk management process;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Future monitoring.

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Parish Council;
- Embed risk management through the ownership and management of risk as part of all decision making processes; and
- Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice.

### **2. What Risk Management is**

2.1 *'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.'* Audit Commission, *Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government*, (2001: 5)

2.2 Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety, but applies to all aspects of the Parish Council's work.

2.3 Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive:



# Wickhambrook Parish Council

**Strategic Risk** – Long-term adverse impacts from poor decision-making or poor implementation. Risks damage to the reputation of the Parish Council, loss of public confidence, in a worst-case scenario Government intervention.

**Compliance Risk** – Failure to comply with legislation, laid down procedures or the lack of documentation to prove compliance. Risks exposure to prosecution, judicial review, employment tribunals and the inability to enforce contracts.

**Financial Risk** – Fraud and corruption, waste, excess demand for services, bad debts. Risk of additional audit investigation, objection to accounts, reduced service delivery, dramatically increased Council Tax levels/impact on Parish Council reserves.

**Operating Risk** – Failure to deliver services effectively, malfunctioning equipment, hazards to service users, the general public or staff, damage to property. Risk of insurance claims, higher insurance premiums, lengthy recovery processes.

2.4 These risks can be broken down further into specific areas which could impact on the achievement of the Parish Council's strategic objectives and day-to-day delivery of services:

**Political** – Those associated with the failure to deliver local, regional or national policy;

**Financial** – Those affecting the ability of the Parish Council to meet its financial commitments; failure of major projects; internal and external audit requirements; failure to prioritise and allocate resources effectively; poor contract management; initiative overload;

**Social** – Those relating to the effects of changes in demographic, residential, or socio-economic trends on the Parish Council's ability to deliver its strategic priorities;

**Technological** – Those associated with the capacity of the Parish Council to deal with the pace/scale of technological change, or its ability to use technology to address changing demands. This includes the consequences of internal failures on the Parish Council's ability to deliver its objectives;

**Legal** – The ability of the Parish Council to meet legislative demands affecting breaches of legislation (UK & EU);

**Environmental** – Those relating to the environmental consequences of progressing the Parish Council's objectives in terms of energy-efficiency, pollution, recycling, emissions etc;

**Partnership/Contractual** – Those associated with the failure of partners/contractors to deliver services to an agreed cost and specification and

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

similarly failure of the Parish Council to deliver services to an agreed cost and specification; compliance with procurement policies (internal/external); ensuring open and fair competition;

**Human Resources** – Those associated with the professional competence of staff; training and development; over-reliance on key personnel; ineffective project management; recruitment and selection issues;

**Organisational** – Those associated with the review of services and delivering continuous improvement;

**Health & Safety/Physical** – Those related to fire, safety, accident prevention and health & safety which pose a risk to both staff and the public; safeguarding and accounting of physical assets;

**Reputational** – Those associated with the changing needs of customers and the electorate; ensuring appropriate consultation; avoiding poor public and media relations.

Not all of these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost effective. Even where insurance is available, a monetary consideration might not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

2.5 Risk is not restricted to potential threats but can be connected with missed opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive responses. Measures to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

### 3. Why the Parish Council needs a Risk Management Strategy

3.1 Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Parish Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided.

3.2 The Risk Management Strategy will help to ensure that its Committees and service areas have an understanding of risk and that the Parish Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance.

3.3 Strategic risk management is an important element in demonstrating continuous service improvement.

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

3.4 There is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk.

## 4. Risk Management Policy Statement

*Wickhambrook Parish Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its aims and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.*

*The Parish Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.*

*Risk management is an integral part of the Parish Council's management processes.*

## 5. Implementing the Strategy

### 5.1 Risk Control

Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures, but in exceptional cases more drastic action may be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Options for control include:

**Elimination** – circumstances from which the risk arises are removed so that the risk no longer exists;

**Reduction** – control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/likelihood of the risk occurring;

**Transfer** – The financial impact is passed to others e.g. by revising contractual terms;

**Sharing** – The risk is shared with another party;

**Insuring** – Insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact; and

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

**Acceptance** – Documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Parish Council accepts or tolerates risk.

## 5.2 Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register (*Appendix A*) will be regularly refined and updated as part of this Risk Management Strategy.

## 5.3 Risk Monitoring

The risk management process does not finish with putting risk control procedures in place. Their effectiveness in controlling risk must be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any changes to the nature of any risk have been taken into account and the risk control procedures adapted accordingly. It is also important to assess whether the nature of any risk has changed over time. The Risk Management Plan will be reviewed at least annually by the Clerk and the Council.

The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or minimised in the future. It will also inform judgements on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

## 5.4 Risk Management System

**Risk Identification** – informed decisions can only be taken by the Council if it has identified and understood the hazards and risks facing the policies and decisions it has undertaken. Risks will be identified in the Annual Risk Assessment carried out in February / March of each year.

- **Risk Analysis** – once risks have been identified, analysis should be undertaken as to the potential frequency of the risk and its consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable then steps should be taken to ensure that the risk is controlled or a response taken to the risk

### **Risk Prioritisation -**

an assessment should be made of the impact and likelihood of risks occurring and prioritised as low, medium or high. High Risk will be subject to detailed consideration and preparation of a contingency/action plan to appropriately control the risk.

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## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance management process of the Parish Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below, are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively right across the Council and its operations, and responsibility for risk is located in the right place.

The Council:

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the council for risk management
- Providing opportunities for shared learning on risk management across the council
- Providing risk management training and awareness sessions
- Incorporating risk management considerations into the Council's management processes
- Effective communication with, and the active involvement of, employees
- Monitoring arrangements on an on-going basis
- Ensure that Internal Audit provides a scrutiny role to provide independent assurance to the Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant risks are being managed effectively
- Ensure that feedback from Internal and External Audit is fed into the Council's risk management strategy
- Ensure that the Council reviews legal guidance published by NALC, on all matters relating to governance and accountability
- Ensure that Council is aware and trained to take effective action on the requirement under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 on the documents needed to be kept in order to show that the Council is complying with the legislation.
- Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects and services undertaken are adequately risk managed;
- Consideration, and if appropriate, endorsement of the Annual Governance Statement; and
  - Assessment of risks whilst setting the budget, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues.

Ensure that the Council annually reviews the Risk Management Strategy and reviews the Insurance Schedule

**6.3 Employees** – will undertake their job within risk management guidelines ensuring that their skills, experience and knowledge are used effectively. All employees will maintain an awareness of the impact and costs of risks and how to feed information into the formal process. They will work to control risks or threats within their roles,

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

monitor progress and report on task related risks to their line manager or the Chair of the Council

**6.5 Role of Internal Audit** – Internal Audit provides an important scrutiny role by carrying out audits to provide independent assurance to the Parish Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively.

Internal Audit assists the Parish Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist the Parish Council in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud.

Internal Audit reports, and any recommendations contained within, will help to shape the Annual Governance Statement.

6.8 In addition to the roles and responsibilities set out above, the Parish Council is keen to promote an environment within which individuals and groups are encouraged to report adverse incidents promptly and openly.

## **7. Future Monitoring**

**7.1 Review of Risk Management Strategy** – This Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Council

## **8. Conclusion**

The adoption of a sound risk management approach should achieve many benefits for the Parish Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Parish Council is committed to continuous service improvement and effective corporate governance.

## General Risk Assessment for – Wickhambrook Parish Council

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
1	Recreational Area: 1. Bury Road 2. Cemetery Road	Play Equipment Vandalism Cost of Replacement	Injury to people using Play Equipment	8	4	32	Weekly Visual inspection of Play area by Parish Volunteer. Monthly written inspection undertaken by West Suffolk, reviewed by clerk and actioned with parish volunteer/councillor  Annual inspection carried out by ROSPA  Dated Insurance including Public Liability.	A
2	Trees on parish lands	Falling Branches/ Debris	Injury to Pedestrians, pets and vehicles	8	4	32	Monthly Visual inspection of trees by Parish Tree warden  Full annual inspection of parish trees and tree surgeon instructed to act on advice.  Dated Insurance including Public Liability	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
3	Gates and Fencing	Vandalism Repair costs Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	4	16	Repair cost Dated insurance including Public Liability	L
4	Grit Bin	Vandalism Impact Damage Repair costs Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	4	16	Repair cost Dated insurance including Public Liability	L
5	Memorial	Cost of replacement Damage to Memorial Vandalism	Loss of Heritage	1	4	4	Dated insurance, including Public Liability Make contingency provision in Parish Council Reserves	L
6	Village Sign	Vandalism Impact Damage Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	1	4	Dated insurance, including Public Liability  Make contingency provision in Parish Council Reserves	L
7	Notice Board	Vandalism Impact Damage Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	1	4	Dated insurance, including Public Liability Make contingency provision in Parish Council Reserves	L
8	Park Benches	Vandalism Impact damage Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	4	16	Dated insurance, including Public Liability  Make contingency provision in Parish Council Reserves	L



No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
9	Fencing at Play Area & Signage	Vandalism Repair cost Cost of Replacement	Pedestrians	4	4	16	Repair cost Dated insurance including Public Liability	L
10	Memorials in Cemetery	Risk of Falling on individuals or causing trips and falls	Clerk Councillors Volunteers Parishioners Contractors	4	4	16	Dated Insurance Including Public Liability Regular topple testing and checks in cemetery	A
11	Laptop & Printer	Cost of replacement Repair cost Accidental Damage	Clerk Councillors	4	4	16	Dated Insurance Including Public Liability  Make contingency provision in Parish Council Reserves for replacement.	a
12	Failure to attract sufficient candidates for Member vacancies or elections	Reduced representation of neighbourhoods Lack of resource Possible meeting inquorate	Members	2	2	4	Actively publicise Council activities Seek candidates amongst friends and colleagues Publicise elections & vacancies on notice boards Publicise elections & vacancies in Parish Newsletter and website /facebook	A
13	Failure to achieve quorum at meetings	Business not transacted Decisions not made	Members Clerk	1	3	3	Issue annual meeting calendar to all members Issue meeting agendas promptly Contact members who fail to attend meetings	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
14	Lack of public consultation by Council	Decisions not based on evidence People disenfranchised	Members	1	2	2	ensure meetings publicised on notice boards use Annual Parish Meeting place articles in local newspapers/parish magazine consider leafleting include public participation on all agendas ensure seating available at meeting for public provide advice for members of the public attending publish agendas and minutes on website	T
15	Failure to respond to electors wishing to exercise right of inspection	Complaints received Not transparent Non compliance	Clerk	1	2	2	Clerk to advertise facility, and respond to requests	A
16	Members acting alone outside meetings	Members outside compliance Indemnities invalid Personal risk	Members	2	2	4	Ensure councillors have access to and read 'Good Councillor Guide' avoid making commitments on behalf of the council all new councillors complete new councillor training	A
17	Council decisions not implemented	Confidence undermined Reputation risk arises Possible losses	Clerk	1	4	4	Clerk to publish draft Minutes to be considered at next meeting Clerk maintains spreadsheet of decisions to ensure actioned	A
18	Inaccurate, untimely, improper minutes	Poor decisions in future Poor evidence for decisions	Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to circulate draft minutes with Councillors not more than 10 days after meeting Draft Minutes published	A
19	Inadequate document control	Poor evidence Poor support to Members	Clerk	1	2	3	Clerk to establish filing and retrieval system Clerk to enforce document version control	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
20	Failure to recognise and address conflict of interest	Lack of transparency Open to complaints of fairness or bias	Members Clerk	1	2	2	Clerk to ensure timely completion of Register of Interests Members to review Standards regime and complete all relevant training offered and available Clerk to ensure declaration of interests at start of each meeting	A
21	Incomplete/inaccurate register of Members' interests	Lack of transparency Open to complaints of unfairness or bias	Members	1	2	2	Members to review Standards regime Clerk to ensure opportunity to update interests at each meeting	A
22	Failure to complete/submit Annual Return on time	Poor Auditors report Public confidence suffers	Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to maintain diary & ensure meeting dates allow for review of documents and submission in good time	A
23	Improper contracting procedures	Possible losses Poor levels of service Possible increased costs	Clerk	1	3	3	Financial regulations & scheme of delegation 2015 national model adopted, separate financial regs Clerk adequately trained	A
24	Loss of data on PC due to system fault	Interruption to effective administration Possible financial loss	Clerk	1	4	4	External hard-drive Daily back up Documents held in cloud	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
25	Loss of services of Parish Clerk	Interruption to effective administration	Members Clerk	2	2	2	<p><b>Internal</b> Reserve Contingency to cover cost of hiring in temporary clerk Ensure clerk takes entitled leave and provide opportunities to discuss work and wellbeing to reduce stress. Support clerk through time and budget for networking</p> <p><b>External</b> Locum Panel of experienced Parish and Town Clerks provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks able to assist in an emergency Up to date List available from the Society of Local Council Clerks on the website or by phoning 01823253646</p>	A
26	Lack of professional advice	Poor decisions Costs and waste Possible noncompliance	Clerk Members	2	2	4	<p>Maintain membership of SALC, NALC and SLCC Support clerk through time and budget for continued professional development</p>	A
27	Lack of defined objectives or strategy	Resources not directed Poor performance Risks not base lined	Members Parishioners	1	2	2	<p>Council to produce an agreed 3 year Corporate Plan New initiatives to be consulted on</p>	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
28	Failure to correctly identify local needs or wishes	Council does not represent the people Resources not applied Democratic deficit	Members	1	3	3	Maintain close contact with local residents Advertise parish meetings to obtain residents' feedback Use questionnaires to identify local wishes (e.g. Post Office, Shop) Publicise plans and invite comments Use events to seek views and feedback Use parish meeting as forum to test ideas for new initiatives and seek ideas to build into next 3 year plan and budgets	A
29	Financial	Misappropriation of Council Funds  Financial loss	Public Services	1	2	2	All Banking Arrangements and changes to banking services approved by the council and recorded in the minutes Pay invoices by cheque/internet banking Cheques only signed at Council meetings Two councillors to sign each cheque, invoice and Cheque stub. Internet Banking two Councillors to authorise online. Monthly reconciliation of Parish Accounts to be signed by the Chairman at each meeting Annual scrutiny of all Financial Records by a Councillor & internal auditor. External Auditor to advise Clerk of the Council and the Chairman All changes in banking instructions, mandates etc. to be in writing with a hard copy kept permanently on file.	A
30	Income Ensuring that all requirements are met under custom & excise regulations	Unable to fulfil responsibilities	Public Service	1	2	2	Ensure Council understands and complies with current VAT legislation	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
31	Orders for Work, goods and services Monitoring of performances against agreed standards under partnership agreements	Unable to fulfil responsibilities	Public Service	1	2	2	Reviewed at internal audit	A
32	Lack of public participation at meetings	Public voice not heard Potential lack of interest in vacancies Lack of transparency	Members	1	2	2	ensure meetings publicised on notice board place articles in local parish magazine include public participation on all agendas ensure seating available at meeting for public provide advice for members of the public attending publish agendas and minutes on website publish reports on website	A
33	Allegations of libel or slander	Potential for litigation Costs of investigation Reduces confidence	Members	1	3	3	Clerk to intervene at meetings Review all press releases or newsletter articles before release Adequate Insurance Cover	A
34	Bad publicity	Reduces confidence	Members Clerk	1	3	3	review all press releases or newsletter articles before release manage press relations	A
35	Accidental damage to fixed assets	Costs of repair Loss of service until repaired	Clerk	2	2	4	Maintain insurance Playground inspection regime established. Inspections of Speed Indicator Device established.	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
36	Vandalism to fixed assets	Costs of repair Loss of service until repaired	Clerk	3	2	6	Maintain inspection regime Maintain insurance Liaison with Police	A
37	Loss to third parties	Possible litigation Costs/damages	Clerk	1	3	3	Review health & safety Ensure adequate insurance Check contractors insurance	A
38	Inadequate insurance	Balance of costs to be found	Clerk	1	4	4	Council to review annually or if circumstances change Review re-instatement value of buildings in accordance with Asset Valuation policy	A
39	Failure to calculate/submit precept on time	Inadequate resources to meet commitments Costs of re-billing	Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to respond to West Suffolk Council notices Agenda item for Members to consider and approve.	A
40	Inadequate annual precept and unsound budget	Inadequate resources to meet commitments	Members	1	4	4	Clerk and Members to build sound budget, using risk register and known commitments. Members to consider Reserves Policy built into Financial Regulations.	A
41	Failure to account for and recover VAT	Wasted resources	Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to claim VAT monthly Internal auditor to check	A
42	Failure to stay within agreed budgets	Inadequate control Potential wasted resources	Members Clerk	1	2	2	Clerk to review Internal auditor to check Reserves Policy to mitigate short-term impact of loss.	A

No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
43	Holding excessive or inadequate reserves	Auditors report Poor use of resources Inability to meet commitments	Members	2	3	6	Clerk to review as part of budgeting Reserves Policy to set percentage of precept. Council to review size of Reserves and report to council regularly	A
44	Fraud by Clerk	Reputation Costs, Litigation	Clerk	1	3	3	Adequate internal audit Regular reporting to members Control systems for managing expenditure Internal monitoring with Clr	A
45	Fraud by Members	Reputation Costs, Litigation	Clerk	1	3	3	Adequate internal audit Regular reporting to members Control systems for managing expenditure	A
46	Inadequate awareness of relevant legislation	Failure to comply	Members Clerk	2	3	6	Maintain membership of SALC/NALC Clerk to train/qualify Adequate budget for Clerk and Councillor training which should be used	A
47	Failure to comply with relevant legislation	Litigation Costs Reputation damage	Members Clerk	2	3	6	Maintain membership of SALC/NALC Clerk to maintain training and records Liaise with internal and external auditors	A
48	Failure to maintain fixed assets register	Improper control Poor auditor's report	Clerk	1	2	2	Council to review Internal audit to review	A
49	Improper financial records	Potential for wasted resources	Clerk	1	2	2	Internal audit to review	A
50	HMRC requirements not met	Costs Litigation	Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to liaise as necessary	A



No	ITEM	HAZARD	RISK TO	SEVERITY 1-10	LIKELIHOOD 1-10	RISK RATE	MEASURES /COMMENTS	RESULT
51	Failure to comply with deadlines for accounts and returns	Poor auditor's report Reduction in confidence	Clerk	1	2	2	Clerk to liaise with internal and external audit	A
52	Non-compliance with data protection	Litigation Poor reputation	Members Clerk	1	3	3	Clerk to monitor	A

**Results Key** – L = LOW RISK    A = ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED RISK    N = NOT ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED    U = UNABLE TO DECIDE (MORE INFORMATION REQUIRED)

**RISK ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT BY:** The clerk

**DATE:** 18/11/2021 **Signature:** .....

## Risk Assessment Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	Severity					
	Multiple Death (10)	Single Death (8)	Major Injury (6)	Lost Time Injury (4)	Minor Injury (2)	Delay (1)
<b>Certain (10)</b>	100	80	60	40	20	10
<b>Very Likely (8)</b>	80	64	48	32	16	8
<b>Likely (6)</b>	60	48	36	24	12	6

May Happen (4)	40	32	24	16	8	4
Unlikely (2)	20	16	12	8	4	2
Very Unlikely (1)	10	8	6	4	2	1
<b>Score</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>				
<b>1 – 16</b>	<b>LOW</b>	Action is required to reduce the risk, although low priority.				
<b>17 – 36</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	Action required to control. Interim measures may be necessary in the short term.				
<b>37 – 100</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	Action required urgently to control risks. Unacceptable				
		Immediate action required				

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Policy Statement

Wickhambrook Parish Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Parish Council.

### Introduction and Purpose:

This policy sets out how WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL operates to keep adults at risk of abuse or neglect and children safe from abuse.

The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

We have a Duty of Care to our volunteers and service users. We are committed to the protection and safety of adults at risk and children whether they are volunteers and/or participants in our activities. We will protect and support the volunteers who work with us as well as users of our services.

All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. Children's legislation includes the Childrens Act 1989 and 2004.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. For our safeguarding policy to be effective every councillor, lay member, volunteer, and staff member who supports us whatever their role, will play their part in keeping people safe.

### Policy Objectives:

1. To ensure that where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Parish Council are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable people.
2. To promote the general welfare, health and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a local government organisation.
3. To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.
4. As the Parish Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children, it expects all children using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent or other responsible adult.

### Aims

The aim of this policy document is to guide members of Wickhambrook Parish Council should any child or vulnerable adult protection issue arise during their work.

## **Definitions:**

### **Adult at risk of abuse or neglect**

For the purposes of this policy, adult at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 42.1 of the Care Act 2014:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service they may still be an adult at risk

**Children and young people** are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all staff, contractors and volunteers and will be used to support their work.

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” is defined in Working Together 2018 as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

### **Persons affected by this policy**

- All councillors, lay members, volunteers and employed staff
- All service users
- All visitors and contractors

### **Our Policy**

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk and children from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment.

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL recognises that under the Care Act 2014 it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

The welfare of the child and/ or adult at risk is paramount and all adults have the right to protection from abuse.

We are committed to working with appropriate agencies including Suffolk Social Care, Suffolk Safeguarding Teams and the police et c. to ensure the reporting of abuse is appropriate and in line with local, national and Charity Commission requirements and Information Sharing guidance.

A Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will be appointed from within the Council  
Appropriate recruitment of councillors, lay members, volunteers and staff is in place including policies on when to obtain a DBS check

We will create an environment where councillors, lay members, volunteers and staff feel able to raise safeguarding concerns and feel supported with their safeguarding responsibilities

Appropriate Safeguarding training is provided to councillors, lay members councillors, lay members, volunteers and staff as part of their induction and a safeguarding refresher course will be provided every three years.

## **Responsibilities & Procedures**

- Decisions on which portfolio responsibilities should require the individual holding them to be checked through Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made by the Council or the Chairman after consultation with the Clerk following risk assessment.
- A councillor will hold leadership responsibility for WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL's safeguarding arrangements
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSO) is responsible for ensuring that:
  - Any safeguarding incident reported to them is handled in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and also referred to the Council for further action as appropriate and future risk assessment.
  - information about child protection and good practice is shared with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.
  - Facilities offered by the Parish Council have been inspected on a regular basis and at least annually by a representative of RoSPA or a similar organisation.
  - In the event of a contractor, working directly for the Parish Council, being deemed to be working in any area where children may be at risk, then that contractor will be asked to provide their Child Protection Policy.
  - before any Parish Council organised event with children or vulnerable persons, participants are briefed appropriately.
- All councillors, lay members, volunteers and staff:
  - who come into contact with adults at risk of abuse, and children and their families as part of their WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL duties will be alert to possible signs of abuse and consider whether there may be safeguarding concerns.
  - be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding including the reporting of people at risk of radicalisation and extremism and discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity
  - will adhere to the 'List of Recommended Behaviour' namely:
    - A minimum of two adults present when supervising children.
    - Adults to wear appropriate clothing at all times
    - Adults not to play physical contact games.
    - Ensure that accidents are recorded in an accident book.
    - Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.

## **Declaration**

Wickhambrook Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

All members of Wickhambrook Parish Council should read the Council's Safeguarding Policy. Having read the Policy they should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable people who are involved in Parish Council activities.

This Policy will be reviewed annually at the first meeting following the Annual Parish Council meeting.

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## Social Media Policy

### Policy statement

- 1.1. This policy is intended to help employees including clerks, RFO's, Executive Officers, part-time, fixed-term and casual employees (collectively referred to as employees in this policy), volunteers and members make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, social networking websites, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the standards we require employees and volunteers to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which we will monitor your use of social media and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.
- 1.3. This policy supplements our Media Policy.

### 2. The scope of the policy

- 2.1. All employees, volunteers and members are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our council.
- 2.2. Breach of this policy by employees may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

### 3. Responsibility for implementation of the policy

- 3.1. The council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 3.2. The clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work.
- 3.3. All employees, volunteers and members should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to The Clerk.
- 3.4. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to The Clerk

### 4. Using social media sites in our name

- 4.1. Only the Clerk and Webmaster are permitted to post material on a social media website in the council's name and on our behalf.

### 5. Using social media

- 5.1. We recognise the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about our council and community. We also recognise the importance of our employees, volunteers and members joining in and helping shape local government conversation and direction through interaction in social media.
- 5.2. Before using social media on any matter which might affect the interests of the council you must:
  - a) have read and understood this policy the Council's Media Policy; and
  - b) employees and volunteers must have sought and gained prior written approval to do so from The Clerk.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

## 6. Rules for use of social media

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- 6.1. Do not upload, post or forward a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- 6.2. Any employee, volunteer or member who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform The Clerk in the first instance.
- 6.3. Never disclose commercially sensitive, personal private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with The Clerk.
- 6.4. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- 6.5. Before you include a link to a third party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it.
- 6.6. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 6.7. Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the council.
- 6.8. You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools.
- 6.9. Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
- 6.10. Don't discuss employees without their prior approval.
- 6.11. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion.
- 6.12. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.

## 7. Monitoring use of social media websites

- 7.1. Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for council purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken against employees under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 7.2. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and us.
- 7.3. In particular a serious case of uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will probably amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
  - a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
  - b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
  - c) material which is offensive, obscene
  - d) criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the council, members, or our employees;

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

# Wickhambrook Parish Council

- e) confidential information about the council or anyone else
- f) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or the council); or
- g) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed under Disciplinary Procedure and for employees may result in summary dismissal.

- 7.4. Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
- 7.5. If you notice any use of social media by other employees or volunteers in breach of this policy please report it to The Clerk in the first instance.

## **8. Monitoring and review of this policy**

- 8.1. The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy bi-annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

This policy was reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (Min. Ref 21.05.06). Next review by May 2022.

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## Wickhambrook Parish Council

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## Wickhambrook Parish Council

### Introduction

These model standing orders are taken from the updated National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model standing orders contained in *Local Councils Explained* by Meera Tharmarajah (© 2013 NALC).

### How to use model standing orders

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

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

The model standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. Model financial regulations are available to councils in membership of One Voice Wales (OVW).

### Drafting notes

Model standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements and have been adopted without changing them or their meaning. Model standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. It is NALC's view that all model standing orders will generally be suitable for councils.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

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**Wickhambrook Parish Council****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 chairman of the meeting.**
- b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.**
- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.**
- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.**
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.**
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.**
- g) An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.**
- h) A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.**
- i) If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.**
- j) Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.**
- k) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.**
- l) A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.**
- m) The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.**
- n) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.**

**Wickhambrook Parish Council**

- o) Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:**
- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;**
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;**
  - iii. to make a point of order;**
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or**
  - v. to exercise a right of reply.**
- p) During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.**
- q) A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.**
- r) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:**
- i. to amend the motion;**
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;**
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;**
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;**
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;**
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;**
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;**
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or**
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.**
- s) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.**
- t) Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.**

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

### 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 for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d) ●● **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed ~~45~~15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

### Wickhambrook Parish Council

- g) Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 5 minutes.
- h) In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i) A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l) ●● **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- m) ●● **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n) ●● **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o) ● **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).**
- p) ● **The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q) ●●● **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

- r) ●●● **The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.** *See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.*
- s) ● **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t) The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
  - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
  - vii. the resolutions made.
- u) ●●● **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- v) ● **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.** *See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*
- w) ●●● **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.**
- x) A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 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.**

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

- b) **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c) **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d) The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
  - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
  - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer (3) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
  - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
  - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
  - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
  - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
  - x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
  - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
  - xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

### 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.**



### Wickhambrook Parish Council

- c) **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d) **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, any number of other ordinary meetings may be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e) **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f) **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g) **The Vice-Chairman of the Council if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h) **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i) **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j) Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
  - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
  - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
  - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
  - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;

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

### 7. Previous resolutions

This policy was reviewed on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council (Min. 21.05.06 Next review by May 2022.

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

### 8. Voting on appointments

- a) Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman 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 7 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 re-submits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting.
- e) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f) The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g) Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h) Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

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### 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.**

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

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### 13. Code of conduct and dispensations

*See also standing order 3(u).*

- a) All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b) Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c) Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d) **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made ~~by~~ by the Proper Officer.
- f) A dispensation request shall confirm:
  - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g) Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- h) **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
  - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
  - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
  - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

## Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

### 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 a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda; 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) and publish electronically notice of the time and place and, as far as reasonably practicable, any documents relating to the business to be transacted at the meeting unless they relate to business which is likely to be considered in private or if their disclosure would be contrary to any enactment.**

*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*



### Wickhambrook Parish Council

- 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 4 clear days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute 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 freedom of information and data protection legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed (*see also standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council;
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect. *See also standing order 23.*

#### 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.



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### 17. Accounts and accounting statements

- a) "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – 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;

This policy was reviewed on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council (Min. 21.05.06 Next review by May 2022.

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- iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b) Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c) **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- d) Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
  - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e) Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

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- f) **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of ~~£189,330,213,477~~ for a public service or supply contract or in excess of ~~£4,733,252,336,937~~ for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.**
- g) **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £378,660 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,733,252 for a works contract; or £663,540 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

### 19. Handling staff matters

- a) A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Parish Council is subject to standing order 11.
- b) Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Parish Council at its next meeting.
- c) The chairman or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution of the parish council.
- d) Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chairman of the parish council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of parish council.
- e) Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the parish council this shall be communicated to another member of the parish council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the parish council.

## Wickhambrook Parish 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 Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

### 21. Responsibilities under data protection legislation

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

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

### 22. Relations with the press/media

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

### 23. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

*See also standing 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.**

This policy was reviewed on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council (Min. 21.05.06 Next review by May 2022.

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### 24. Communicating with county borough or county council councillors

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

### 25. Restrictions on councillor activities

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

### 26. Standing orders generally

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

## Training and Development Policy

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for members, staff (whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term) and volunteers.

Wickhambrook Parish Council is committed to provide a level of training for both its members, staff and volunteers to enable them to undertake their respective roles for the betterment of not only the Council and the Community it serves, but also their personal development.

### Training

Training is defined as "a planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the Organisations".

Learning can be categorised into the following:

- Intuitive – learning which happens by chance and we may not be conscious of it.
- Incidental – learning by reflection on particular events or activities.
- Retrospective – a system approach to reflecting on activities and identifying what we learned from them.
- Proactive – planning to learn from an activity, reflecting on it and planning to use what we learned.

It is anticipated that member, staff and volunteer learning will reflect many of the above.

### Training Aims

The Council's training aims are the following:

- To improve the understanding of its members, of their role as a local Councillor, the powers available to the Council and how best to utilise the resource available to the Council for the betterment of the residents it serves.
- To improve the understanding of its lay members and other volunteers, of:
  - their role on committees;
  - the powers available to the Council and how it can best to utilise its resources for the betterment of the residents it serves;
  - Any role specific knowledge necessary in their roles as volunteers
- To provide the necessary training to its staff to ensure that they are able to undertake their respective roles.
- To ensure an acceptable level of succession planning in order to:
  - a) Ensure the Council can operate effectively following local elections and other potential changes to the Council membership.
  - b) Ensure the Council can continue to operate during times where staff may be unavailable (e.g. holidays, sickness staff turnover etc.)
  - c) Ensure the Council is meets the standards to obtain Quality Parish Status

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## Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction (and probationary periods for staff)
- One-to-ones (and appraisals for staff)
- Skills audits
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Annual plan
- Change processes

In addition, the council will encourage members and staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

### Consideration

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors include availability of finance, the role of the individual and, in the case of staff, individual's employment record.

### Categorising training and personal development

In order to ensure that the council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

The three categories are as follows:

#### Mandatory [M]

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, member, or volunteer, or training or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement.

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training include:

Member	Staff	Volunteer
Code of Conduct Roles & Responsibilities of Councillors	Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on Guidance for Support below).	Manual handling

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILCA</li> <li>• Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Display Screen equipment)</li> <li>• Data Protection</li> </ul>	
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## Strongly Recommended [S]

Strongly Recommended training is not legally required, but it is directly relevant to the individual's role. In the case of councillors, an individual may be elected, or co-opted without having previously undergone the training but may reasonably be expected to complete the training within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings. Examples include:

Member	Staff	Volunteer
Code of Conduct  Roles & Responsibilities of Councillors  Powers, duties & precept  Effective meetings (Chair & Vice Chair)		

## Desirable [D]

Desirable training is not legally required, but it is directly relevant to the individual's role. In the case of staff, any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be elected, co-opted or recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings (or annual appraisals for staff). A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

Member	Staff	Volunteer
SALC Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Control &amp; Planning; and</li> <li>• Working with your community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA)</li> <li>• Cemetery Legal Compliance</li> <li>• Microsoft Excel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROSPA Inspections for play equipment</li> <li>• Using power machinery (e.g. cutting footpaths)</li> </ul>



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## Optional [O]

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

## Training Budget

The Council shall allocate a training budget to cover provision of training activities, attendance at conferences and training publications for members, staff and volunteers.

The budget will take into consideration any mandatory, desirable and optional training opportunities identified for Members, Staff and Volunteers.

## Councillors' Training

Activity		Frequency
All Councillors are provided with New Members Induction Pack following Election or Co-option and receive a short training session as soon as practicable after their acceptance of office.	<b>M</b>	On first election/co-option and then every 4 years
All Councillors are encouraged to complete a skills audit to identify training needs	<b>D</b>	Yearly in March
All Councillors shall complete SALC Code of Conduct and Roles and Responsibilities training modules within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.	<b>S</b>	On Election or Co-option to Office
All Councillors should complete SALC training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Powers, duties &amp; precept</li><li>• Effective meetings</li><li>• Development Control &amp; Planning; and</li><li>• Working with your community</li></ul>	<b>S</b>	Within one year of their election or co-option
Councillors elected as chair or vice-chair should complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chairperson and leadership training</li><li>• Budgeting for Councillors</li></ul>	<b>S</b>	Within six months of election as chair or vice-chair
All Councillors are encouraged to attend networking and training events as appropriate to their portfolios and/or the Council's needs and responsibilities	<b>D</b>	Annually
Councillors elected to the Staffing Committee available shall attend relevant training before determining any performance management matters.	<b>D</b>	On election to the Committee and as and when required.

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All Councillors are provided with and encouraged to read the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Parish Councillors Guide;</li><li>• Local Council Finance; and</li><li>• Governance &amp; Accountability</li></ul>	<b>D</b>	On Election to Office
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## Appointed Staff

All new Staff to take Induction Training	<b>M</b>	Within six months of commencement
All staff to undertake staff appraisals to develop training needs	<b>M</b>	Annually
All office based staff encouraged to undertake the following, for which the Council will provide financial support: 1. Working with your Council 2. Certificate in Local Council Administration] 3. Certificate in Local Policy Studies	<b>M</b> <b>D</b> <b>O</b>	On going
All staff encouraged to read regular publications and update from internet Websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SALC</li> <li>• SLCC</li> <li>• The Clerk</li> <li>• NALC</li> <li>• Local Council Review</li> </ul>	<b>D</b>	Monthly
All staff encouraged to attend training relevant to their position	<b>D</b>	on-going

## Lay Members and Volunteers

Activity		Frequency
All new Lay Members and Volunteers are provided with New Volunteers Induction Pack following and receive a short training session as soon as practicable.	<b>M</b>	On first application as a lay member/volunteer
All Lay Members and Volunteers are encouraged to complete a skills audit to identify training needs	<b>D</b>	On first application and bi-annually in June.
All Lay Members shall complete SALC Code of Conduct training module within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.	<b>M</b>	On first appointment to committee
All Lay Members should complete SALC training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective meetings</li> <li>• Working with your community</li> </ul>	<b>D</b>	Within one year of their appointment to committee
All Lay Members and Volunteers are encouraged to attend networking and training events as appropriate to their portfolios and/or the Council's needs and responsibilities	<b>D</b>	Annually
All Lay Members and Volunteers are provided with and encouraged to read any relevant articles relating to their responsibilities.	<b>O</b>	On going

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## Guidance for support

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include [financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials in addition to half/day release and time off for study leave and taking any examination]. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council.

For staff members, any financial support in excess of [£1000], including the offer of a loan, will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided. The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee;

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training
- Fails to attend training without good reason]

## Study leave

Where individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

[Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of 3 days per annum].

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.