

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
Accessibility Statement (website)	May 2023	1	Minor formatting changes
Asset Valuation Policy	May 2023	2	Minor formatting changes
Complaints Procedure	May 2023	3	Minor formatting changes updated timescale (highlighted)
Co-option of Councillors Co-option Application Form	May 2023	4	Minor wording change highlighted Minor formatting changes
Data Protection Policy	May 2023	5	Minor Formatting changes
Dispensation of s.106 Agreement – Housing Allocations	May 2023	6	Minor formatting changes
Document Retention & Disposal Policy	May 2023	7	Minor formatting changes
Equality and Diversity Policy	May 2023	8	No Change
Estates Committee Terms of Reference	January 2024	9	Minor formatting changes
Financial Regulations	May 2023	10	Substituted in its entirety for the new Model Financial Regulations incorporating Jan '24 Procurement Thresholds.
Financial Risk Assessment	April 2024	11	No Change
General Risk Assessment	January 2024	12	No Change
Grant Application Form Grant Awarding Policy	May 2023	13	Minor formatting changes highlighted Update Clerk's address
Health & Safety Policy	May 2023	14	Update Public Liability Insurance Requirement to £5m
Internal Control Statement Internal Control Report	July 2023	15	No Change
Media Policy	May 2023	15	No Change
Parish Action Plan	May 2023	16	Updated to incorporate planned spending and activities
Privacy Statement	May 2023	17	No Change
Publication Scheme	May 2023	18	Updated Web Addresses formatting changes
Requests for Information Policy (FOI)	May 2023	19	No Change
Reserves Policy	May 2023	20	Minor Formatting Changes
Risk Management Policy	January 2024	21	Minor Formatting Changes
Safeguarding Policy	May 2023	22	Minor formatting changes
Social Media Policy	May 2023	23	No Change
Standing Orders	May 2023	24	Substituted in its entirety with NALC Model Standing Orders 2022 incorporating

Wickhambrook Parish Council

			Jan '24 Procurement Thresholds
Subject Access Request (New)	May 2023	25	Minor formatting changes
Suffolk Code of Conduct	May 2023	26	Replaced in its entirety with LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct
Training & Development Policy	May 2023	27	Updated reference to LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct
Wickhambrook Emergency Plan	May 2023	28	Updates to contacts

Proposed amendments are identified above.

Recommendation:

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

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
May 2024

Accessibility statement for wickhambrook.org

This accessibility statement applies to Wickhambrook.org.

This website is run by Wickhambrook Parish Council in association with Mdsign Internet Services Limited. We want as many people as possible to be able to use this website and are actively working to check and meet accessibility guidelines.

Images have a text alternative, so people using a screen reader can access the information. This complies with WCAG 2.1 success criterion 1.1.1 (non-text content).

We've made the website text as simple as possible to understand.

[AbilityNet](#) has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

How accessible this website is

We know some parts of this website are not fully accessible, we are currently working on this and will update this statement as progress is made.

Feedback and contact information

If you need information on this website in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille:

For the Wickhambrook Parish Council pages, e-mail parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk, or call 07508 039810

We'll consider your request and get back to you in 10 working days. If you cannot view the map on our 'contact us' page, call or email us <https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/> for directions.

Reporting accessibility problems with this website

We're always looking to improve the accessibility of this website. If you find any problems not listed on this page or think we're not meeting accessibility requirements, please contact us using the details above.

Enforcement procedure

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to your complaint, [contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#).

Technical information about this website's accessibility

Wickhambrook.org is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Compliance status

This website is partially compliant with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1](#) AA standard, due to the non-compliances and exemptions listed below.

Non-accessible content

The content listed below is non-accessible for the following reasons.

- We are currently assessing which content is non-accessible.
- We plan to improve accessibility during 2024 to further meet accessibility standards.

Non-compliance with the accessibility regulations

We have identified the following content types which are not accessible:

The content listed below is non-accessible for the following reasons.

Non compliance with the accessibility regulations (website) PDFs and other documents

Many of our PDFs may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. This fails WCAG success criterion 4.1.2 Name, Role Value. We aim to ensure the top 10% most viewed documents on our website are accessible as explained in our disproportionate burden assessment.

Disproportionate burden

We are always looking to improve the accessibility of this website.

- we carried out detailed accessibility checks of wickhambrook.org and our parish council pages - as this is our most important content
- we carried out basic checks of our other pages.
- We have assessed it would be a disproportionate burden within the meaning of No. 2 regulations to pay for an independent auditor to undertake a detailed check on our website.

Some elements of it may involve accessibility problems that would be a disproportionate burden to fix.

We are continuing to assess the website to ascertain whether this is the case and will update our statement accordingly.

Elements that may be a disproportionate burden now will not necessarily be a disproportionate burden forever. If the circumstances change we will assess these elements again and make any improvements we are able.

Fixing documents

Having carried out a detailed check of wickhambrook.org, we've also assessed that it would be a disproportionate burden within the meaning of the No. 2 Regulations to fix all documents published on wickhambrook.org since 23 September 2018.

The majority of these documents have rarely been viewed, therefore they are not negatively impacting users with disabilities or impairments. For this reason, we don't believe the cost of time, effort and resource to fix all the documents is justified.

We will focus on fixing the most viewed documents on and ensuring that new documents are accessible before they are published.

Content that's not within the scope of the accessibility regulations

PDFs and other documents

The accessibility regulations [do not require us to fix PDFs or other documents published before 23 September 2018](#) if they're not essential to providing our services. For example, we do not plan to fix Agendas, Minutes and other parish council documents published before this date.

Live video

We do not plan to add captions to live video streams because live video is [exempt from meeting the accessibility regulations](#).

Preparation of this accessibility statement

This statement was prepared on May 2024 It was last reviewed May 2023

Asset Valuation Policy

1 Background

- 1.1 Local councils must maintain an asset register to ensure fixed assets are appropriately safeguarded. This includes items of a capital nature where values tend to be high and which have a useful life of more than one year (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England) 2014, para. 3.66). The Council's Financial Regulations, section 13 refers to the custody of Assets, Properties and Estates.

2 Scope of asset register

- 2.1 In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:
- land and buildings held freehold or on long term lease in the name of the Council
 - community assets
 - vehicles, plant and machinery
 - assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
 - other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase or resale value of £100
 - long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council
 - assets held on trust (e.g. monies held on behalf of the Chairman's charity)
- 2.2 The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'total fixed assets' section of the Annual Return with the exception of assets held on trust.
- 2.3 The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:
- land and buildings held on short term lease or rented
 - land and buildings maintained or serviced, but not owned by the Council
 - assets rented by or loaned to the Council
 - stock items intended for resale
 - stationery and other consumable items
 - boundaries of land owned (e.g. fences, hedges and gates)
 - floor or land surfaces and drainage
 - plants and trees
 - assets with a purchase or resale value of less than £100 (other than items listed as for inclusion in the asset register)
 - repairs
 - cash, short term investments and other current assets
 - intangible assets (e.g. trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
 - 'negative' assets (e.g. provisions, borrowings, creditors and contingent liabilities)
- 2.4 A separate section of the asset register will contain a schedule of disposals.

3 Valuation of assets

- 3.1 Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local councils (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England) 2014, para. 3.69).
- 3.2 Assets must be valued by one of the following means based on available information:
 - ideally, apply the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT has been reclaimed);
 - otherwise, apply the purchase price (gross of VAT if VAT has not been reclaimed or where the VAT status of the purchase is unclear)
- 3.3 Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price of the asset the insurance (rebuild) valuation should be applied. This applies specifically to:
 - Chapel of Rest; and
 - War Memorial

As a last resort, a nominal value of £1 may be applied. This should also be used for assets gifted to the Council.

- 3.4 There is no guidance where land or buildings have been subject to substantial renovation and improvement to such an extent that the new market value bears no relation to the original purchase cost. In order to avoid renovation and improvement work being separately recorded on the asset register and in these exceptional circumstances only, a market value supplied by a qualified surveyor may be entered.

4 Procedure for updating the asset register

- 4.1 The start point is the asset register that has been agreed for the end of the previous financial year. The financial ledger should be reviewed for all purchases made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been gifted to the Council. Any new assets which fall in the categories stated at 2.1 above should be added to the asset register, with their values recorded at the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT is being reclaimed) or at £1 if gifted to the Council.
- 4.2 The financial ledger should also be reviewed for all asset sales made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been lost, disposed of or gifted by the Council. Any assets which fall in the categories stated at 2.1 above should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals. The asset register should record any assets loaned by the Council, including the person or organisation borrowing the asset, its location and the date when the loan period ends.
- 4.3 A 'stock take' of asset register items should occur to ensure that all asset register items can be physically verified. Any assets which cannot be located should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals.
- 4.4 The asset register, schedule of disposals and this policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Council at the same time as the approval of the Annual Return.

Complaints Procedure

1. The Importance of Complaints

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish Council is the Parish 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, action taken, outcome, and time taken to resolve.
 - (iv) To identify improvement points arising from any complaints.
 - (v) To identify staff training issues.

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

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.

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 Parish 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 (3 working days by e-mail)

Investigation completed - 14 days

or Progress Reports Issued - 14 day intervals

Investigating Officer: Parish Clerk

5.5 Review of Investigation and Complaint (Second Stage)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Parish 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 Parish Clerk - 14 days

Panel (if thought necessary) - Convened within 14 days

Review completed - 14 days thereafter

Investigating Officer: Parish Clerk

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, 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 Parish 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 Parish 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

Parish Clerk: Hilary Workman

E-mail: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Telephone: 07508 039810

Postal: 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2FP

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Co-option Application Form

Name	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Please detail any experience you may have that is relevant to the Parish Council (continue onto a separate sheet if necessary).

Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application (continue onto a separate sheet if necessary) ?

Declaration and consent



I confirm that I am not disqualified from being a councillor and meet the criteria under s.79, Local Government Act 1972, as below:

- I am over 18 yrs age
- I am a qualifying commonwealth citizen or an EU citizen
- I meet one or more of the other requirements, as indicated below.
 - I am registered as a local government elector for the parish
 - I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co- option occupied, as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish
 - My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish
 - I have during the whole of those twelve months resided in or within 3 miles of the parish

Signed..... Name

Date.....

Please return this completed form to:

Hilary Workman, Clerk & RFO, 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 2FP

Email: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Use of personal information

The Parish Council will use your information, including that which you provide on this application form, to assess your suitability as a Parish Councillor. For full details of how we manage personal information please use this link to visit our website and our privacy notice.

INFORMATION & DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. 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:

- a. 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.
- b. Confidential information and data not yet in the public arena such as ideas or policies that are being worked up.
- c. Confidential information about other organisations because of commercial sensitivity.
- d. Personal data concerning its current, past and potential employees, Councillors, and volunteers.
- e. 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.

2. 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 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:

- a. Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
- b. Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.

- c. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.
- d. Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

3. **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:

- a. organising, adapting or altering it
- b. retrieving, consulting or using the information or data
- c. disclosing the information or data by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making it available
- d. aligning, combining, blocking, erasing or destroying the information or data.

regardless of the Technology used.

Wickhambrook Parish Council processes personal data in order to:

- e. fulfil its duties as an employer by complying with the terms of contracts of employment, safeguarding the employee and maintaining information required by law.
- f. 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.
- g. monitor its activities including the equality and diversity of its activities

- h. fulfil its duties in operating the business premises including security
- i. assist regulatory and law enforcement agencies
- j. process information including the recording and updating details about its Councillors, employees, partners and volunteers.
- k. process information including the recording and updating details about individuals who contact it for information, or to access a service, or make a complaint.
- l. undertake surveys, censuses and questionnaires to fulfil the objectives and purposes of the Council.
- m. undertake research, audit and quality improvement work to fulfil its objects and purposes.
- n. 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.

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

- a) The individual has consented to the processing
- b) Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract or agreement with the individual
- c) Processing is required under a legal obligation
- d) Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual
- e) Processing is necessary to carry out public functions
- f) 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:

- a) Explicit consent of the individual
- b) 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

5. 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.

E-mail: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Phone: **07508 039810**

Correspondence: Parish Clerk, 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2FP.

6. 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.

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

7. 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 wherever 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10.Children

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

11.Rights of a Data Subject

- a. **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
- b. **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

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

12.Data Transparency

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:

- a. **Demand led:** new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability
- b. **Open:** the provision of public data will be integral to the Council’s engagement with residents so that it drives accountability to them.
- c. **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:

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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 with 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.

Document Retention & 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.

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).
- 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
- 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.

List of Documents for Retention and Disposal.

Document/record	Minimum Retention Period
Administration	
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
Finance	
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
Miscellaneous	
Reports, Guides, Handbooks etc received from other bodies	Retain as long as useful
General Correspondence	Retain as long as useful

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

- i. **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.
- ii. **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.
- iii. **RACE** - We will:
 - challenge racism wherever it occurs;
 - respond swiftly and sensitively to racists incidents; and
 - actively promote race equality in the Parish Council.
- iv. **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.
- v. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION** - We will:
 - ensure that we take account of the needs of LGBTQ members of society and promote positive images of them; and
- vi. **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.

- vii. 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.
- viii. 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.
- ix. 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)
- x. 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.

Estates Committee Terms of Reference

1. 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 cemetery and parish lands on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Liaise with other statutory bodies (e.g. Suffolk County Council PROW, Environment Agency etc to maintain and improve opportunities for recreation through open access schemes (e.g Footpaths and Byways)

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

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.

4. 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.

5. Meetings:

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.

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

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.

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.

6 Responsibilities of the Committee

- 6.1 To keep under review the provision of the sports, recreational and parish lands for the residents of Wickhambrook, as below:
- 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.
- 6.2 To ensure that annual safety inspections are carried out to meet legal requirements for the above spaces.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 To manage use of the Parish Council's recreational grounds
- 6.5 To advise the Parish Council of the impact of proposals by owners or occupiers of land that may affect its recreational and sports facilities, cemetery or parish lands.
- 6.6 To review and set the level of the annual fees for use of the Cemetery
- 6.7 To review and recommend regulations for the Parish Council's Cemetery
- 6.8 To work in partnership with the Safer Neighbourhood Team to alleviate antisocial behaviour and vandalism in/on the Parish Council's sports and recreational facilities, cemetery and parish lands.
- 6.9 To work in partnership with appropriate funding bodies to improve the Parish Council's recreational and sports facilities, cemetery and parish lands.
- 6.10 To put forward to the Parish Council, proposals for any improvements, developments or any capital expenditure when requesting funding for the following year.
- 6.11 To prepare an annual report to summarise the work undertaken in the exercising of its delegated powers for consideration by the Parish Council.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Voting Rights

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.

10. 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.

11. 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 subcommittee 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.

12. 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.

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL - MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

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

Notes to assist in the use of this template:

- 1) This document is a model for councils of all sizes to use to develop their own financial regulations, suitable for the size of the council and the activities it undertakes.
- 2) Bold text indicates legal requirements, which a council cannot change or suspend.
- 3) For the rest, each council needs to adapt the model to suit its size and structure. For example, some councils have both a clerk and RFO, possibly with several more staff, while others have a single employee as clerk/RFO. Some councils have committees, some have a high level of delegation and some make all decisions at full council meetings. Many now use online payment methods, but others still rely on cheques.
- 4) Curly brackets indicate words, sentences or sections that can be removed if not applicable, or amended to fit the council's circumstances. An example of this is the phrase {or duly delegated committee}, which can be deleted if there are no committees.
- 5) Specific areas that may need adapting:
 - a) In 1.5 – is the Clerk the RFO?
 - b) In 3.3 and 3.4, the words “Governance and Accountability” do not apply in Wales
 - c) In section 4, does the council have committees and how many years are forecast?
 - d) In 5.6, does the council issue an open invitation to tender, or invite specific firms?
 - e) In 5.9, are online prices acceptable evidence?
 - f) In 5.13, 5.15 and 5.17, does the council have committees?
 - g) In 5.16, will a councillor ever be instructed to place an order?
 - h) In 5.20, is there a minimum level for official orders?
 - i) Section 6 includes several alternatives to cover delegation to committees or to officers, approval of invoices individually or in batches, or for approval of regular contractual payments at the beginning of the year.
 - j) Sections 7, 8 and 9 also includes several alternatives, including wording for where the clerk is a signatory. These are intended to allow a council's financial regulations to fit what they actually do, not to force any council to change what they do.
 - k) Section 10 gives two alternatives, with or without petty cash.
 - l) 13.6 has alternatives for VAT-registered and unregistered councils – only use one.

- m) 13.7 and 13.8 are removable if they don't apply to the council.
 - n) Much of Section 16 can be deleted if not applicable.
 - o) 17.3, is the Clerk the RFO or will the RFO consult the Clerk?
- 6) Square brackets indicate where the council needs to specify who, or how much, or what the timescale is. For example [£500] might need to be £100, or [October] might need to be November, or [the council] might need to say the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - a) In 4.1 and 4.7, select the wording for England or Wales, based on your location.
 - b) In Section 4, the council needs to determine the timescale for its budget setting.
 - 7) It is challenging to try to offer guidance on setting financial limits. A council spending £1,000 a year is unlikely to delegate authority to spend £500 to its proper officer, but one spending £5 million a year might regard £5,000 as a reasonable limit. Each council needs to determine its own limits, that help, rather than hinder, its operations.
 - 8) Key limits to set:
 - a) In 5.6, at what limit will the council require a formal tender process to ensure fair competition, rather than just asking for quotes? If this is set too low, it may discourage suppliers. Many small councils might only use formal tenders once every few years.
 - b) In 5.8, at what limit will the council require fixed-price quotes rather than estimates?
 - c) In 5.9, at what level can smaller purchases be made without competition?
 - d) In 5.15, at what level can purchases be made under delegated authority (having complied with the rules about obtaining prices)?
 - e) In 5.18, how much can the clerk commit to spending in an emergency?
 - f) In 6.9, can payment of invoices (for purchases that have already been authorised) be authorised by an officer under delegated authority as a general principle, or only to avoid problems?
 - g) In Section 9, what are the limits for card payments?
 - h) In 16.5, what value of assets can be bought or disposed of, without seeking council approval?
 - 9) The contents list is a table that extracts section headings from the document. It can be updated by clicking on the contents list, whereupon a tab saying "update table" appears at the top of the list.
 - 10) Once this model has been tailored to fit the council's needs, the resulting Financial Regulations (with the insertion of the council's name at the top) should be adopted at a meeting of the full council. The date of adoption should be inserted below the Contents. Any subsequent proposal for amendment should also be made to the full council.
 - 11) The council should keep abreast of developments in legislation that affect the local council sector and should review and update its Financial Regulations annually.
 - 12) Please ensure that the latest approved version is published on the council's website.

[ENTER COUNCIL NAME] FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on [enter date].

1. General

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

- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

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

2. Risk management and internal control

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

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

3. Accounts and audit

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

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

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

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

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

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

4. Budget and precept

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

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by [the council] at least annually in [November] for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council.

4.3. No later than [November] each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all [receipts and payments/income and expenditure] for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

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

4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council } not later than the end of [November] each year.

4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.

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

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed [£20,000] including VAT, the Clerk shall {seek formal tenders from at least [three] suppliers agreed by [the council]} 2. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of**

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

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

- 5.8. For contracts greater than [£3,000] excluding VAT the Clerk [or RFO] shall seek at least [3] fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between [£500] and [£3,000] excluding VAT, the Clerk [or RFO] shall try to obtain 3 estimates {which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.}
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, [the clerk] shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- [the Clerk], under delegated authority, for any items below [£500] excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below [£1,000] excluding VAT.
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under [£5,000] excluding VAT
 - .}
 - the council for all items over [£5,000];
- Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.
- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order } or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.

- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to [£1,000] excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to [the council] as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless [the council] is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services {above [£250] excluding VAT} unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by [the RFO].

6. Banking and payments

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

Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council may authorise in advance for the year.

- 6.7. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council } for information only.
- 6.8. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:
 - i. {any payments of up to [£500] excluding VAT, within an agreed budget}.
 - ii. payments of up to [£1,000] excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the [Clerk 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 {or finance committee}.
 - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of [£10,000], provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or finance committee].
- 6.9. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council 1. The council {or committee} shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

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

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

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by [two members]
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

8.4. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

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

10. Petty Cash

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

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

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

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

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

12. Loans and investments

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. Income

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

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

13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by [the RFO] and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

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

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

- 13.6. {Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made {quarterly where the claim exceeds [£100] and} at least annually at the end of the financial year.}
- 13.7. {Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.}
- 13.8. {Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.}

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

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

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. {[The clerk] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment[].}
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. {The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.}

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other

consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed [£500]. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.

17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to [the RFO] of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers {in consultation with the Clerk}.

17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

18.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations [annually] and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

18.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

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

Appendix 1 - Tender process

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

Financial Risk Assessment 2024 - 2025

Topic	Risk Identified	Risk Level H/M/L	Management of Risk	Staff action
Assets	Loss, Damage etc	M	Annual inspection, update insurance and asset registers	Diary
	Risk or damage to third party property or individuals	M	Review adequacy of Public Liability Insurance	Diary Update Asset Register after purchases and advise Insurers to ensure schedule is current
	Loss of financial assets	L	The Council advises its insurers and introduces such further safeguards, such as increased fidelity insurance, as may be required by the Insurers.	RFO to advise
Direct Costs and overhead expenses	Goods not supplied to Council	M	Follow up on all orders Where items to be delivered to a third party – check receipt	Approval check
	Invoice incorrectly calculated or recorded	L	Check arithmetic on invoices and perform bank reconciliations on at least bi-monthly basis	Clerk to undertake Member to verify
	Cheque payable is excessive or to wrong party	L	Signatory initials Stub & Voucher Check bank details on bottom of invoice each time before payment and update where necessary Ensure bank details and payee verified through bank.	Approval check
	BACs payment is excessive or to wrong party	L	Invoices available to Cllrs at meeting. Authorised signatories to check payment transaction against invoice before approving.	Members to verify Transaction details printed to reverse of invoice as check that details tally.
Election Costs	Invoice at agreed rate	L	RFO check and consider budget Reserves to be built over four year period to cover anticipated contested election costs	RFO verify
Financial Records	Inadequate Records	L	RFO/Clerk check annual & internal audit review RFO/Clerk to ensure receipts where invoices not available. Ensure remittance receipts filed for each credit.	Diary
Grants & support	No power to pay or no evidence of agreement of Council to pay	L	Minute Council agreement with the power used to authorize payment	RFO check Member verify Powers noted in report proposing authorised payments. Have requested accounting software make this possible within accounting package.

Financial Risk Assessment 2024 - 2025

Topic	Risk Identified	Risk Level H/M/L	Management of Risk	Staff action
	Claims procedure	M	Clerk/RFO check as required	Diary
	Receipt of grant when due	M	Clerk/RFO check as required	Diary
Internet Banking	BACs Payments of Invoices	L	The Council appoints two Councillors (who are not cheque signatories) to verify the schedule of payments made from the internet banking account against sample invoices selected at random on a regular basis.	RFO makes schedule of payments available to Cllrs at each ordinary meeting Investigate whether it is possible to get a record of which Cllr's complete on-line authorisation for each payment.
	Access codes & passwords	M	The internet banking access codes and passwords are retained securely by the Clerk/RFO and no internet banking is undertaken on a computer to which the public have access.	Computers are password protected and hard copies kept in locked filing cabinet. Passwords stored securely on LastPass software which is also password protected.
	Online security	M	The Council installs, and keeps updated, anti-virus software on all computers used for Internet Banking.	Clerk to check parish laptops and that Cllrs have virus software on their computers
Investment Income	Receipt when due	L	Clerk/RFO check as required – no current investment income	n/a
	Surplus funds	L	Review levels and investment policy annually – no current investment income	n/a
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payment	L	Educate councillors as to their legal powers RFO to identify power for spend when items are identified in reports for authorisation	RFO to check powers when preparing report Updating of Financial Standing orders annually
Loss	Consequential loss due to critical damage or 3 rd Party performance	L	Review adequacy of insurance cover	Diary
Maintenance	Reduced value of assets or amenities – loss of income or performance	M	Annual Maintenance Inspection	Diary

Financial Risk Assessment 2024 - 2025

Topic	Risk Identified	Risk Level H/M/L	Management of Risk	Staff action
Members Interests	Conflict of Interest	M	Ensure register of interests is completed and up to date Link to Register of Interests to be available on website Declarations of interest and any exclusion of members from relevant agenda items or dispensations to be documented in minutes. Ensure adequate funds set aside for Cllr Training Ensure Cllrs undertake training and understand their role and obligations under new Suffolk Code of Conduct	Diary Ensure members leave room when item under discussion or dispensation has been approved. Ensure minute records when Cllrs leave room for the avoidance of doubt.
Minutes	Accurate & Legal	L	Timely preparation of minutes Review at following meeting Ensure consecutively numbered	Diary
Other Income	Cash handling	L	There is no cash handling – all payments are now done by means of submission of an expenses claim and receipts	n.b. Careful attention to ensure receipts attached to claims and where multiple items on receipt, specific item highlighted. Ensure timely quarterly submission of expenses claims.
	Banking	L	Segregate duties. Check to bank statements. Monthly bank reconciliations Move to online banking has enabled regular checking of transactions and monthly reconciliations	The Clerk has increased the regularity of Bank Reconciliations (imonthly, which are published on the agenda)
	From Cemetery	M	Burial Register updated for grave allocations as required. Check of burial register to invoices to undertakers. Check of memorial fees work dockets to invoicing.	Clerk has introduced receipts for payments and new cemetery management has been installed and implemented recording transactions
Precept	Not submitted	L	Full Minute – RFO follow up	Diary
	Not paid by DC	L	Confirm receipt – check correct bank details when submitting precept request form	Diary
	Adequacy of precept	M	Bi-monthly review of budget to actual	Clerk provides review of income and expenditure at each meeting.
Reserves – General	Adequacy	L	Consider at Budget setting and review bi-monthly and at year end	RFO opinion. A 3 year plan is prepared at each draft budget

Financial Risk Assessment 2024 - 2025

Topic	Risk Identified	Risk Level H/M/L	Management of Risk	Staff action
Reserves – Earmarked	Adequacy	L	Consider at Budget, bi-monthly and at year end to move unspent funds into relevant ear-marked reserves. RFO to ensure that spend from reserves is authorised by full council.	RFO opinion Reserves have been considered at year-end adjustments made. Reduction in number of EMR lines for clarity
	Unidentified Earmarked or Contingent liability	L	Review minutes	RFO/member view
Salaries	Wrong salary/hours/rate paid	M	Check salary to minute, check hours and rate to contract	Member to verify
	Wrong deductions – NI and Income tax	M	Check to PAYE Calculations PAYE calculations undertaken by appointed third party payroll provider	Member to verify
	Conditions agreed	L	Agree and document any reasonable conditions	RFO check
Segregated Funds	Unidentified	L	Review Minutes	RFO/member view
Staff	Loss of key personnel (Clerk)	L	Hours, health, stress, training, long term sick, early departure – risk monitored and managed as appropriate	RFO/member view 2 month contingency reserve added at 2020-21 budget and carried forwards
	Fraud by Staff	L	Fidelity Guarantee value appropriately set	Council to review annually as part of insurance plan
VAT	VAT analysis	M	All items in cash book lists	RFO verify
	Charged on purchases	L	Consider all items per cash book lists	RFO verify
	Claimed within time limits	M	RFO to submit monthly and report on next agenda. Payment received to be reported on agenda under income.	RFO verify

Approved and Adopted: *Min Ref 24.04.11*

Vice-Chair: 
Cllr Paul Couzens

Dated: *25.04.2024*

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 Qualified inspector 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 tri-annual inspection of parish trees and tree surgeon instructed to act on advice. Intervening inspection of trees identified with a diary note and tree surgeon instructed to act on advice Dated Insurance including Public Liability	A

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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 Full five year test of memorial over 3'	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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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 Public confidence Auditors report 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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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>Internal 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>External 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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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: 05/01/2024 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)
Certain (10)	100	80	60	40	20	10
Very Likely (8)	80	64	48	32	16	8
Likely (6)	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
Score	Priority	Action				
1 – 16	LOW	Action is required to reduce the risk, although low priority.				
17 – 36	MEDIUM	Action required to control. Interim measures may be necessary in the short term.				
37 – 100	HIGH	Action required urgently to control risks. Unacceptable Immediate action required				

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL
 c/o The Clerk, Mrs H Workman
 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton
 Bury St Edmunds IP31 2FP

Tel: **07508 039810**
 e-mail: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk
 website <https://wickhambrook.org>

APPLICATION FOR A GRANT

Before completing 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, 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds IP31 2FP

Email: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Details of Your Organisation:

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

Details of Grant Requested:

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

Profiles:

Grant requested: £

Please provide a breakdown of costs which make up the grant requested:

Details of Other Grants – please include grants received from Wickhambrook PC:

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:

Grant Awarding Policy

1. 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

2. 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.

2.1 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.

2.2 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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

- 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

3. Grant Application Process

Please complete and submit the Small Grant Application form to:

The Clerk, Mrs Hilary Workman

3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 2FP,

or e-mail to 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 March of the financial year prior to the funds being required.

4. 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.

5. 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.

Health and Safety Policy

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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 £5m. 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.
- 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.

Wickhambrook Parish Council

INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit.

Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control: -

'The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control.... care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.'

As part of its internal control, Wickhambrook Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE Yes or No	COMMENTS – check documents and initial
Ensuring an up to date Register of Assets		
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets		
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover		
Annual review of financial risk		
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations		
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders		
Regular reporting on performance by contractors		
Annual review of contracts (where appropriate)		
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed		

Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure		
Recording in the minutes or appendices of the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved		
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted		
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked		
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to District Council notification		
Contracts of employment for staff Contract annually reviewed Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer		
VAT correctly accounted for VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook		
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council		
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council		
Compliance with DCLG Guide Open & Accountable Local Government 2014, Part 4: Officer Decision Reports		
Compliance with Local Transparency Code Of 2015: Items of expenditure incurred over £500		

Verifying that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements Are the following in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit / Impact Assessment • Privacy Notices • Procedures for dealing with Subject Access Requests • Procedure for dealing with Data breaches • Data Retention & Disposal Policies 		
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping		
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality		
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members		
Declaration of Acceptance of Office		

Date of review of system of Internal Controls.....

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name..... Signature.....

Report submitted to Council (date).....

(minute reference)

Next review of system of Internal Controls due.....

Additional comments by reviewer:

Wickhambrook Parish Council

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Wickhambrook Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its January meeting. The January meeting of the council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Clerk reports to the Council progress against objectives and position against the adopted budget in accordance with the Council's financial regulations. A Councillor is appointed with a portfolio to review, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control, bank reconciliation checks and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. A bank reconciliation is reported to the council at least bi-monthly and is recorded in the minutes.

The full council meets seven times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the parish clerk.

The council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See attached Report.

Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the council for approval. Two members of the council must:

- authorise each BACS payment made through internet banking, and/or
- sign every cheque for payment.

For each cheque signed, the signatories should consider each payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council. Where delegation permits, as per s.101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Council's Financial Regulations, a report will be provided to the next full Council.

The parish council, in setting up its internet banking arrangements, has followed the advice provided by Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC).

Income:

All income is received and banked in the council's name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The council reviews its risk assessment annually in April, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The council appoints an independent and competent internal auditor who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of it's:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations • Risk management

External Audit:

The council's external auditors, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

Model Internal Control Statement and Report to Council. This document should be tailored to meet the needs of your Council particularly where [] are shown.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.

Chairman

RFO/Clerk

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.
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.

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL - MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

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

Notes to assist in the use of this template:

- 1) This document is a model for councils of all sizes to use to develop their own financial regulations, suitable for the size of the council and the activities it undertakes.
- 2) Bold text indicates legal requirements, which a council cannot change or suspend.
- 3) For the rest, each council needs to adapt the model to suit its size and structure. For example, some councils have both a clerk and RFO, possibly with several more staff, while others have a single employee as clerk/RFO. Some councils have committees, some have a high level of delegation and some make all decisions at full council meetings. Many now use online payment methods, but others still rely on cheques.
- 4) Curly brackets indicate words, sentences or sections that can be removed if not applicable, or amended to fit the council's circumstances. An example of this is the phrase {or duly delegated committee}, which can be deleted if there are no committees.
- 5) Specific areas that may need adapting:
 - a) In 1.5 – is the Clerk the RFO?
 - b) In 3.3 and 3.4, the words “Governance and Accountability” do not apply in Wales
 - c) In section 4, does the council have committees and how many years are forecast?
 - d) In 5.6, does the council issue an open invitation to tender, or invite specific firms?
 - e) In 5.9, are online prices acceptable evidence?
 - f) In 5.13, 5.15 and 5.17, does the council have committees?
 - g) In 5.16, will a councillor ever be instructed to place an order?
 - h) In 5.20, is there a minimum level for official orders?
 - i) Section 6 includes several alternatives to cover delegation to committees or to officers, approval of invoices individually or in batches, or for approval of regular contractual payments at the beginning of the year.
 - j) Sections 7, 8 and 9 also includes several alternatives, including wording for where the clerk is a signatory. These are intended to allow a council's financial regulations to fit what they actually do, not to force any council to change what they do.
 - k) Section 10 gives two alternatives, with or without petty cash.
 - l) 13.6 has alternatives for VAT-registered and unregistered councils – only use one.

- m) 13.7 and 13.8 are removable if they don't apply to the council.
 - n) Much of Section 16 can be deleted if not applicable.
 - o) 17.3, is the Clerk the RFO or will the RFO consult the Clerk?
- 6) Square brackets indicate where the council needs to specify who, or how much, or what the timescale is. For example [£500] might need to be £100, or [October] might need to be November, or [the council] might need to say the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - a) In 4.1 and 4.7, select the wording for England or Wales, based on your location.
 - b) In Section 4, the council needs to determine the timescale for its budget setting.
 - 7) It is challenging to try to offer guidance on setting financial limits. A council spending £1,000 a year is unlikely to delegate authority to spend £500 to its proper officer, but one spending £5 million a year might regard £5,000 as a reasonable limit. Each council needs to determine its own limits, that help, rather than hinder, its operations.
 - 8) Key limits to set:
 - a) In 5.6, at what limit will the council require a formal tender process to ensure fair competition, rather than just asking for quotes? If this is set too low, it may discourage suppliers. Many small councils might only use formal tenders once every few years.
 - b) In 5.8, at what limit will the council require fixed-price quotes rather than estimates?
 - c) In 5.9, at what level can smaller purchases be made without competition?
 - d) In 5.15, at what level can purchases be made under delegated authority (having complied with the rules about obtaining prices)?
 - e) In 5.18, how much can the clerk commit to spending in an emergency?
 - f) In 6.9, can payment of invoices (for purchases that have already been authorised) be authorised by an officer under delegated authority as a general principle, or only to avoid problems?
 - g) In Section 9, what are the limits for card payments?
 - h) In 16.5, what value of assets can be bought or disposed of, without seeking council approval?
 - 9) The contents list is a table that extracts section headings from the document. It can be updated by clicking on the contents list, whereupon a tab saying "update table" appears at the top of the list.
 - 10) Once this model has been tailored to fit the council's needs, the resulting Financial Regulations (with the insertion of the council's name at the top) should be adopted at a meeting of the full council. The date of adoption should be inserted below the Contents. Any subsequent proposal for amendment should also be made to the full council.
 - 11) The council should keep abreast of developments in legislation that affect the local council sector and should review and update its Financial Regulations annually.
 - 12) Please ensure that the latest approved version is published on the council's website.

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Action Plan 2024/25



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Introduction

Context

This is our third Action Plan, prepared at a time of austerity across society when all organisations that provide services to the community, be they public, private or voluntary are facing cost pressures and resource restrictions. The emphasis is on value for money, efficiencies, collaboration and accepting that some things just will not get done. Through a planning process though, we can have a shared vision and direction, protect what is important and consider new ways of getting things done.

Although not new, encouraging others to help themselves and not to rely on things being done for them is as important as ever. The aspiration for West Suffolk has been set out elsewhere as being **‘committed to ensuring that everything we do takes account of the needs and views of local communities, residents, businesses and interest groups’**. That means communities that can help themselves, that have the networks and resources to find local solutions to local problems, and have the means to ensure that wherever possible those that do need services can access them at a time and in a way that is most suitable.

Wickhambrook Parish Council, as the first tier of local government, is uniquely situated to provide the forum for understanding and supporting the needs of this community. It provides advocacy on behalf of its residents, uses linkages to other organisations to bring in services, or directly procures them itself. Liaison with West Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils happens at all levels, and there are linkages to health and social care as well. Day-to-day, the Council will seek solutions for the community, looking for skills and volunteers to make improvements to our surroundings or bringing particular neighbourhood issues to local attention to promote a better quality of life for all.

Above all your Parish Council is here to help, support and encourage. This Plan tells you how.

The Planning Cycle

Planning (and performance) is a continuous process of gathering and assessing information, formulating actions, doing them, and then reviewing performance and gathering again.



Of course at key stages one has to pause and reflect, and consider how the plan is evolving – and not just once per year, as the plan is relevant to every significant decision made.

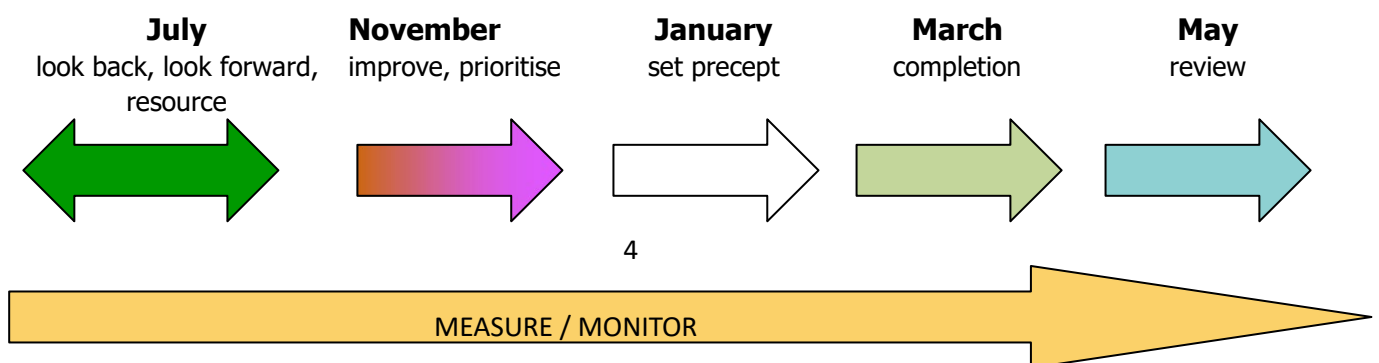
Once specific actions are agreed to deliver this Plan, will be entered on the Actions Register, which will be monitored at every meeting of the Council.

Linkages

This Plan is linked very closely to the allocation of resources – mostly financial, but people’s time and energy too. Our finance is almost entirely derived from the Council Tax system, which follows the financial year April to March. Our precept, or ‘demand’, placed upon the Council Tax system has to be declared every January, in order that West Suffolk Council can calculate the overall tax collection sums for each eligible household and produce the billing required.

Key dates

Therefore this Plan will be drafted from November in each year, allowing it to evolve as the budget is also prepared, for final precept calculations in January. The Plan cycle will run from April to March, to match the funding available, and will be formally reviewed in May and November to assess achievements in the previous cycle, and progress in the current one.



What is a parish council?

There are two sorts of parishes whose boundaries do not always coincide:

- the Ecclesiastical Parishes centred on an Anglican church with a parochial church council and,
- the Civil Parishes, which are part of local administration, having a parish (or town) council.

A civil parish is an independent local democratic unit for villages, smaller towns, and suburbs of urban areas. Each parish has a Parish (or Town) Meeting consisting of all its local government electors and most (where the electorate exceeds 200) have a Parish or Town Council. Over 13 million people live in such parishes, with approximately 1279¹ in the parish of Wickhambrook.

The parish council is a small local authority. Its councillors are elected for four years at a time in the same way as for other councils. Bye-elections may be held to fill vacancies occurring between elections, or members may be co-opted onto the Council if no election is called. The council is the corporation of its parish in the Suffolk area, it covers the village of Wickhambrook and outlying Greens. In May each year the councillors choose a chairperson from amongst their number. In the Wickhambrook Parish, there are eight councillors who make up the Parish Council, which employs a part-time Clerk to manage administration.

¹ Suffolk Observatory 2020

What can we do?

Powers and Duties

Parish councils have a number of formal powers, set out in a wide range of legislation. A duty is something that a council must do, a power is something that it may do, if it so decides. A parish council cannot do anything that is not permitted in law.

Parish Councils in Suffolk have lately become more significant, as two District Councils (St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) have merged to become West Suffolk and may now seem more remote. The parish councillors know the villages and can now represent their views directly to other authorities like West Suffolk and the Area Boards, Health Authorities, Police and Fire Authorities at County level.

The parish council is entitled to be consulted on planning applications, which include work to listed buildings and on proposals in conservation areas, and is often consulted on such things as schools and roads. It puts the parish's case at public inquiries. Recent moves from Government toward greater 'localism' are set to increase the role of Parish Councils even further, especially in the field of development control and planning. An example of this is the Parish Council's support of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, a parish led project which will help local people to identify and promote the right development for their community (whilst still meeting local and national planning guidance and requirements).

Accountability

You elect its members every four years - the next time will be May 2027 - and you are entitled to attend the annual parish meeting (held between 1st March and 1st June each year) and to say what you think. You can also go to every meeting of the Parish Council and meet the Council members, listen to their business and participate in the time especially set aside for that purpose at the start. The accounts are strictly audited every year and published.

You can find out more about what we do, how we do it, and our meetings on the parish website at <https://www.wickhambrook.org>

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What do we do?

The Parish Council provides a number of direct services to the community, and acts as custodian to a number of assets held in the 'public name'.

A full [list of the parish assets](#) is listed on the website, but includes: •

- Open Spaces (e.g. Six Acres, the Greens and Cemetery)
- Play equipment
- Street Furniture (Notice boards, benches, waste bins etc)
- The War Memorial, Chapel of Rest and Village Sign
- Office Equipment

The Council is responsible for maintenance, repairs and insurance for these items and facilities.

Although West Suffolk Council is the Planning Authority, the Parish Council is consulted on most planning applications² made in the parish. Councillors consider planning applications at their meetings and inform Wiltshire Council of their views.

At each meeting of the Council, reports from our District and County Councillors are received (and we work with them to resolve issues which affect the parish). Each meeting considers issues for our communities such as:

- planning (for example, housing or tree felling)
- speeding and volume of traffic
- crime and community safety
- responding to consultations on issues which might affect our community.

Some matters, such as, facilities for young people, or items of maintenance in the 'public realm' that need reporting to appropriate authorities are dealt with by our Estates Committee.

The Council can act as advocate for residents, a conduit for communicating information, and will liaise with appropriate departments of other public authorities to ensure that views, comments and necessary actions are dealt with.

What we have achieved in the past eighteen months

Between November 2022 and April 2024, we have achieved a wide range of improvements, both to the way we work, and to the community we serve:

Adopted

- A range of new policies and documents, including:
 - Accessibility Statement (website)
 - Privacy Statement
 - Subject Access Request
 - Co-option of Councillors (& Application)

Reviewed its policy statements and procedures for:

- **Governance** – including Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessments and Standing Orders
- **Information** – including Complaints, Data Protection, Document Retention, Media, Publication Scheme, Requests for Information and Social Media
- **Organisation** - including Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Training Policy
- **Assets** – including Cemeteries Regulations and Fees; Six Acres Agreements, specification for grounds contract and review of parish lands

Considered and responded to a range of consultations, including:

- West Suffolk Draft Local Plan
- Police & Crime Plan Consultation
- Eighteen Planning applications, most of which were supported by this Council

² There are some exceptions, for example, Discharge of Conditions

Delivered

- Drainage of the pond at Coltsfoot Green
- An upgrade to the upper part of Footpath 25 from Six Acres to Coltsfoot Green
- Purchase of catering and support equipment for loan to village organisations (with thanks to Cllr Sarah Pugh, who grant funded this from her locality budget) A survey of the memorials in Wickhambrook Cemetery (of 236 tested, 13 were found to be in need of repair)
- Nine volunteer mornings tidying the cemetery
- Purchase of a new Parish Notice Board at Shop Hill (the old Notice Board will be re-purposed)
- Three litter picks (with thanks to Mary Jolland and Barbara Merritt of WMSC)
- Planting of a new hedge line between the cemetery and cemetery road (with thanks to Cllr Bobby Bennett for facilitating the funding for this from Highways).
- Identifying additional funding through Wayleave
- Approaches to SCC and Havebury to negotiate transfer of parcels of land at Bury Road Pocket Park to the parish council, which maintains it.
- Providing kits to 1st Wickhambrook Beavers who've installed eight bird boxes in the Cemetery
- Memorial Testing in Wickhambrook Cemetery

Worked with partners to:

- Suffolk Public Rights of Way – extension of the hard surfacing on Footpath 25 to the base of Six Acres.
- Suffolk County Council Highways – Installation of the new Bus Shelter on Cemetery Road
- A team of volunteers in the parish (coordinated by Amanda Lavelle) who put on Warm Winter Wednesdays in January and February, hosted at the WI Hall; and
- Mary Jolland leading the Cemetery Tidying days and volunteers, Kathy Cordy, Mel Karunaratne, Mike Lavelle, Roger Medley and Jo Pask.

What do we want to do next?

The Parish Council reviewed its priorities for the next three years as part of the draft budget review in November.

The table below sets out the Action Plan adopted by the Council and arranged over the next three years:

Ser	Issue	Action	Lead Partners	Resource Implications	Timescale
Long-term Overview					
1	Maintain impetus of Action Plan	Formal and regular overview by Parish Council	WPC	Nil Time for Clerk @ 3 hours per quarter	Quarterly (suggest combining with Quarterly Budget Report)
2	Maintain relevance of Parish Plan	Annual review by WPC Presentation at Annual Parish Meeting	WPC	Nil Time for clerk 2 hours	May 2025
Facilities and Services					
3	Providing facilities for children, young people and families	Review the recreational area facilities and capture ideas for future consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-surfacing of Skate park Re-surfacing of MUGA space Replacement equipment for children's play area – Cemetery Road Improvements to surfacing beneath swings and zip wire 	WPC, Estates Committee West Suffolk Families & Communities	Small consultation expenses & display boards Time for Clerk	Complete by September 2023 to feed into 2024/25 budget Delivery of project in Year 2 ('24/25)
Community Safety					
4	Emergencies and public health risks	Review Emergency plan & publish guidance to residents of parish	WPC West Suffolk Council Residents, Businesses and Volunteers	Some assistance available from Suffolk County Council for Emergency Plan advice	May '24
5	Accident and Public Health Risk	Encourage reporting of fly tipping to West Suffolk DC Maintain periodic 'litter pick'.	Residents, Businesses and Volunteers	Promotion time for Clerk	Ongoing 3 – 4 times a year
Culture, Leisure and Recreation					

Local Economy and Tourism					
6	Assisting the local economy, including encouraging tourism	Continued marketing of the church, countryside, walks, B&Bs, etc	WPC Estates Committee (Footpaths Officer) Clerk & Web Master	Will evolve out of preparation of Neighbourhood Plan	Continuing
Education and Communications					
7	Improve communication of Parish Council activities	Monthly Parish News Facebook Page Noticeboards	WPC	£200	Continuing
Environment and Countryside					
8	Maintain support for conservation and restoration in village, greens and outlying and countryside	Continue recruiting volunteer support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter picking Cemetery maintenance Footpaths Hedging and tree planting 	WPC Volunteers Residents Farmers	<£100 (spring and winter bulbs annually)	Ongoing
9	Improve knowledge and understanding of Rights of Way, their use and accessibility	Advertise Rights of Way Standard Request feedback on condition of rights of ways walked by parishioners	WPC Footpaths Officer Farmers Residents	Time spent by clerk collating, reporting and liaising with PROW	Ongoing
Health and Social Care					
10	Improve support to older people	Consider establishing Suffolk Good Neighbour Scheme	WPC Volunteers West Suffolk Families and Communities Community Action Suffolk	To be established	Ongoing
Housing, Development and the Built Environment					
11	Taking forward local preferences when considering local planning applications.	Consider how profile of Planning applications can be raised	WPC	Clerk time	Ongoing

12	West Suffolk Council's respect for local views in determining housing strategy allocations	Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey Kept updated	WPC West Suffolk AECOM	Grant Funding from Locality Time spent by Clerk supporting project	Ongoing
13	Development of Rural Exception Site if evidenced through NP preparation	Discussions with West Suffolk Council, Landowner of preferred site under draft local plan	WPC West Suffolk Strategic Housing Cams ACRE/CAS	<£1000	Establish evidence in Year 1
Transport and Traffic					
14	HGV use of B1063 and C Routes through parish	Monitor	WPC	Clerk Time	Continuing
15	Road Safety/Reduction of speed in vicinity of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAS Monitoring & Reporting Increased use of footpaths and cycling Cross parish working 	WPC Road Safety Working Group Suffolk County Council Highways Suffolk Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk time Grant funding Support through locality funding 	Current year
16	Road Safety/Reduction of Speed in Wickham Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Cllr to promote need with SCC 	WPC SCC Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk time Locality Grant £To be established (RTO) 	Year 1 '25/26
Parish Assets					
17	Cemetery Notice Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase Cemetery Plan (legal requirement) 	WPC	Estimated £610	Year 2
18	Repair to Cemetery Gates leading to Chapel of Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To replace the posts and re hang the gates and railings To remove gates and railings, powder coat Paint existing top finials 	WPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ 2980.80 inc vat £ 2191.20 inc vat £ 417.60 inc vat 	Year 2

19	Parish Lands	Updating HM Land Registry and registering Six Acres & Cemetery Land	WPC Suffolk County Council	Valuation £600 per parcel of Land £1500 plus Disbursements	Year 2
20	Cemetery Extension Project	Purchase of parcel of land to east of Cemetery for additional burial space. The priority for this may increase if changes to Environmental Permitting Regulations force larger burial plot sizes	WPC Local Land Owner SALC	£10 - £40K	Year 3
21	Churchyard Memorials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing 	WPC	<£600	Year 1
Organisation/Governance					
22	Cemetery Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving accessibility to Councillors 	WPC	Officer time	Continuing
23	Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of support provided by Parish Insurers to review risk assessments for activities and events 	WPC	available through Parish Insurance	Ongoing

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Suffolk IP31 2FP

Tel: 07508 039810

E-mail: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Website: <https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/parish-council-news/>

PRIVACY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This Privacy Statement has been provided to help explain why and how Wickhambrook Parish Council collects, uses and protects your information whilst acting as a Parish Council.

WHY IS A PRIVACY STATEMENT NECESSARY?

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018 provided clear responsibilities for those collecting, using and protecting personal information in addition to those provisions as set out in the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

WHAT INFORMATION DO WE HOLD ABOUT YOU?

Depending upon the service we are offering or carrying out we may hold: your name; address; email address; telephone number; views/opinions or other information relevant to a particular enquiry or service.

HOW DO WE USE YOUR INFORMATION?

GDPR says that we are allowed to use personal information only if we have a proper reason to do so. This may include sharing the data with other parties. We can only use the data for one or more of these reasons:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory obligation or legal duty; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fulfil a contract we have with you;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a legitimate interest; or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have your consent.

We will not use your data for other purposes than for what it was collected unless we have obtained your consent or for other lawful purposes.

HOW LONG WILL WE KEEP YOUR INFORMATION?

We will hold our personal information in accordance with statutory responsibilities and contractual requirements in line with our Document and Electronic Data Retention Policy.

WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND YOUR RIGHTS?

Under GDPR, the Parish Council must ensure that personal data is:

• Processed lawfully, fairly and transparent;	• Collected only for valid and explicit reasons;
• Relevant and limited to what is necessary;	• Accurate and kept up to date;
• Kept for no longer than is necessary;	• Processed securely.

The GDPR provides you with the following rights:

• The right to be informed	• The right to access
• The right to rectification	• The right to erasure
• The right to restrict editing	• The right to data portability
• The right to object	• Rights in relation to automated decision making & profiling
• The right to withdraw of consent	• The right to complain

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

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
Class1 - Who we are and what we do This will be current information only		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees Contact details for Parish Clerk Contact details (in accordance with GDPR) for Council members Details of accessibility to Parish Council	Available free on website address: https://wickhambrook.org Available free on noticeboards or hard copy from Clerk	See below **See below **see below **
Staffing Structure	Clerk to Parish Council	See below ** See below ** See schedule of Charges
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	There is no parish council office. Meetings are generally held in The Pavilion, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre, Cemetery Road, Wickhambrook Clerk's office hours are generally mornings, Monday to Friday	See below ** See below ** See schedule of Charges
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it Available from Financial Years 2018-19 onwards	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **

Wickhambrook Parish Council

Annual Governance & Accountability Return form	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below**
Annual statutory report by auditor (internal and external)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of Charges **
Finalised budget	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of Charges **
Precept request	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of charges **
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **
Grants given and received	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy – contact Clerk	See schedule of charges **
Members’ allowances and expenses	Hard copy – contact Clerk	See schedule of charges **

Wickhambrook Parish Council

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Parish Plan (summary document)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below ** See schedule of charges
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below ** See schedule of charges
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines – (none at present)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of charges **
Class 4 – How we make decisions		
Limited to current and previous 3 years only		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of charges **
Agendas of meetings	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council-agenda/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See schedule of charges **
Minutes of meetings (this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-	See schedule of charges **

Wickhambrook Parish Council

	council/minutes/ or hard copy from Clerk*	
Reports presented to council meetings (this will exclude information that is regarded as private to the meetings)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council-agenda/ or hard copy from Clerk*	Free See schedule of charges
Responses to consultation papers	On request to the Clerk	See below *
Responses to planning applications (note these are reported in the minutes)	Available on West Suffolk Planning Portal	See below *
Bye-laws (none at present)	On Request to the Clerk	See below*
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures		
Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: Procedural standing orders Code of Conduct Policy statements	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **
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)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **

Wickhambrook Parish Council

Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below**
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	attached to this register	See below **
Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Any publicly available register or list	Hard copy – contact Clerk *	See below**
Assets Register	Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/parish-council/documents/ or hard copy from Clerk*	See below **
Disclosure log (indication the information that has been provided in response to requests)	on request to the Clerk *	See below**
Register of members' interests	link available via website	
Register of gifts and hospitality	On request to the parish Clerk*	See below**

Wickhambrook Parish Council

<p>Class 7 – The services we offer</p> <p>Current information only</p>		
<p>Burial grounds and closed churchyards (for fees and charges & policies)</p>	<p>Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/cemetery/ or hard copy from Clerk*</p>	<p>See below**</p>
<p>Play area and recreational facilities</p>	<p>Available free on website address https://wickhambrook.org/cemetery/ or hard copy from Clerk*</p>	<p>See below **</p>
<p>Seating, litter bins and memorials.</p>	<p>on request to Parish Clerk</p>	<p>See below**</p>
<p>A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)</p>	<p>Website Hard copy – contact Clerk</p>	<p>See below **</p>
<p>Additional Information This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above</p>		
<p>Members’ Declarations of Acceptance of Office</p>	<p>On request to parish clerk</p>	<p>See below**</p>
<p>Job descriptions</p>	<p>On request to parish clerk</p>	<p>see below**</p>

Wickhambrook Parish Council

Requests for Information:

Requests for information should be made to the Parish Clerk, Hilary Workman

Telephone: 07508 039810
Post: 3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2FP
Email: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

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.

Schedule of Charges

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and is published as part of the guide

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge – cost of stationery & admin time
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ £1 first sheet then 10p per sheet (black & white) or 15p per sheet (colour)	Actual Cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail
Statutory fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation

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.

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 (parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk).

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

3 Farriers Close, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds IP31 2FP

Or email 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 (a schedule of costs is provided within the Publication Scheme).

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.

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

Wickhambrook Parish Council

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 Policy

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:
- 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 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.
- 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

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 it 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.

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

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

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.

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**

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.

Wickhambrook Parish Council

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Policy Objectives:

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.

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.

To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.

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.

4. 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.

5. Definitions:

5.1 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

5.2 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

5.3 Persons affected by this policy:

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

6. 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.

7. 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:

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. information about child protection and good practice is shared with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers. o 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.
- 7.3. 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.
- 7.4. Before any Parish Council organised event with children or vulnerable persons, participants are briefed appropriately.
- 7.5. All councillors, lay members, volunteers and staff:
- 7.6. who come into contact with adults at risk of abuse, and children and their families as part of their WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL duties will
 - 7.6.1. be alert to possible signs of abuse and consider whether there may be safeguarding concerns.
 - 7.6.2. 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
 - 7.6.3. 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.

8. 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

1. 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.

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;

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.

NB: Procurement thresholds in Section 18 amended 1 January 2024, [click on this link to view the briefing](#)

**MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2018 (ENGLAND) — UPDATED
APRIL 2022**

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INTRODUCTION

This is version two of Model Standing Orders 2018 (England) updated on April 2022. Update to Model Standing Order 18 only.

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 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 NALC.

Drafting notes

Model standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them 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.

A model standing order that includes brackets like this '()' requires information to be inserted by a council. A model standing order that includes brackets like this '[]' and the term 'OR' provides alternative options for a council to choose from when determining standing orders.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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

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

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

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

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice 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 (15) minutes unless

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

- **the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise**
- **his/her/their casting vote whether or not he/she/they gave an original**
- **vote.**

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

- **s Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her/their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i. the time and place of the meeting;
- ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

- **u A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a**
- **disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the**
- **Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her/their right to participate and vote on that matter.**

- **v No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- **w If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted**
- **and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting**
- **shall be adjourned to another meeting.**

- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of (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.**
- 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 () days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
 - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the

meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

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

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless he/she/they has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her/their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless he/she/they resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he/she/they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He/she/they may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair**

of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her/their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of

its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

- xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

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

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

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

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

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

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

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

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

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of**

personal data.

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

12. DRAFT MINUTES

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

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

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

● e **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**

- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless he/she/they has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she/they has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they had the interest.
- c Unless he/she/they has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she/they has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He/she/they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she/they had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made [by the Proper Officer] and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**

- i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
- ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
- iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

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

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

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

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least (4) days before the meeting confirming his/her/their withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her/their office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(*see also standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the [Chair or in his/her/their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council] within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of [the Council]
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(*see also standing order 23*).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:

- i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
- i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

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

circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

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

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of [Council] is subject to standing order 11.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of [the Council or, if he/she/they is not available, the vice-chair (if there is one) of [absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to [the council at its next meeting.
- c The chair or in his/her/their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of [Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer]. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by [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 chair or in his/her/their absence, the vice-chair in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [the 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 chair or vice-chair 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)].
- 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/her/their personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

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

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

24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council 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 (two) councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

16 January 2024

Procurement Thresholds

The thresholds for public procurement have changed from 1 January 2024

Public contracts, with an estimated value (including VAT, since 1 January 2022):

over £214,904 (previously £213,477) for goods or services, or

over £5,372,609 (previously £5,336,937) for public works (construction),

must comply with the full requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (which will be replaced by the Procurement Act, when it takes effect later in 2024). These include specific tendering methods and timescales, as well as a requirement to advertise on both the Contracts Finder website and Find-a-Tender (the UK e-notification service).

Where a contract will run for several years, it is the total (not annual) value that matters.

Where the estimated total value (including VAT) is below these thresholds, but exceeds £30,000 (after 21 December 2022), a council is required to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder if they publish an open invitation to quote/tender. If they are inviting specific firms and not opening it up to wider competition, they don't have to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Reg. 110(5)(b)).

However, a council must comply with its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and if those regulations require an open invitation and a formal tender process, the council should follow them. Tendering processes ensure fair competition, achieve value for money and avoid anti-competitive behaviour. They protect the council and taxpayers.

If a council simply chooses specific firms to invite, it must avoid allowing non-commercial considerations (defined in Part 2 of the Local Government Act 1988) to influence its decisions. If a council invites some suppliers and not others, it should record its reasons.

If the council genuinely believed the value would be under £30,000 but the tenders came in above that, the Regulations do not require it to go back and start again.

Regardless of whether the opportunity was advertised, Regulation 112 requires a council to publish the award of a contract over £30,000 on Contracts Finder within a reasonable timescale. There is no specified timescale for parishes, but we suggest within 3 months.

Disclaimer

This bulletin is only intended as a brief guide and councils should ensure they follow the Regulations and guidance on www.gov.uk, seeking professional advice if they are in any doubt. The Parkinson Partnership LLP accepts no liability for any loss arising from situations where councils have not followed the law and guidance.

Subject Access Request Form

Process to Action		
Name of requester (Method of communication) Email Address Phone number Postal Address		
Date Subject Access Request made		
Is the request made under the Data Protection Legislation	Yes	No
Date Subject Access Request action to be completed by (One month after receipt time limit)		
Extension to the date of reply requested (An extension of another two months is permissible provided it is communicated to the subject within the one month period)	Yes	No
Extension date advised to the Subject Requester and method of contact		
Identification must be proven from the below list: Current UK/EEA Passport UK Photo card Driving Licence (Full or Provisional) EEA National Identity Card Full UK Paper Driving Licence State Benefits Entitlement Document State Pension Entitlement Document HMRC Tax Credit Document Local Authority Benefit Document State/Local Authority Educational Grant Document HMRC Tax Notification Document Disabled Driver's Pass Financial Statement issued by bank, building society or credit card company Utility bill for supply of gas, electric, water or telephone landline A recent Mortgage Statement A recent council Tax Bill/Demand or Statement Tenancy Agreement Building Society Passbook which shows a transaction in the last 3 months and their address		
Verification sought that the Subject Access request is substantiated	Yes	No
Verification received	Yes	No
Verification if the Council cannot provide the information requested	Yes	No
Is the request excessive or unfounded?	Yes	No
Request to be actioned	Yes	No



Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority’s requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and

offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidating or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local

authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer

<p>Corporate tenancies</p>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<p>Securities</p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Training and Development Policy

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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

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

4. 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.

5. 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:

5.1 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILCA • Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Display Screen equipment) • GDPR 	

5.2 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)	Budget Preparation Year End VAT Safeguarding Cemetery Legal Compliance Microsoft Excel	

5.3 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"> Development Control & Planning; and Working with your community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROSPA Inspections for play equipment Using power machinery (e.g. cutting footpaths)

5.4 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'.

6. 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.

6.1 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.	M	On first election/co-option and then every 4 years
All Councillors are encouraged to complete a skills audit to identify training needs	D	Yearly in March
All Councillors shall complete LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct and Roles and Responsibilities training modules within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.	S	On Election or Co-option to Office
All Councillors should complete SALC training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powers, duties & precept • Effective meetings • Development Control & Planning; and • Working with your community 	S	Within one year of their election or co-option
Councillors elected as chair or vice-chair should complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson and leadership training • Budgeting for Councillors 	S	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	D	Annually
Councillors elected to the Staffing Committee available shall attend relevant training before determining any performance management matters.	D	On election to the Committee and as and when required.
All Councillors are provided with and encouraged to read the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parish Councillors Guide; • Local Council Finance; and • Governance & Accountability 	D	On Election to Office

6.2 Appointed Staff

All new Staff to take Induction Training	M	Within six months of commencement
All staff to undertake staff appraisals to develop training needs	M	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	M D O	On going
All staff encouraged to read regular publications and update from internet Websites: • SALC • SLCC • The Clerk • NALC • Local Council Review	D	Monthly
All staff encouraged to attend training relevant to their position	D	on-going

6.3 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.	M	On first application as a lay member/volunteer
All Lay Members and Volunteers are encouraged to complete a skills audit to identify training needs	D	On first application and biannually 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.	M	On first appointment to committee
All Lay Members should complete SALC training on: • Effective meetings • Working with your community	D	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	D	Annually
All Lay Members and Volunteers are provided with and encouraged to read any relevant articles relating to their responsibilities.	O	On going

7. 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]

8. 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.

Wickhambrook

Community

Emergency

Plan

Date of Document:	20.05.24		Author: MPL
Version number:	02		
Review Date:	18.04.24		

AMENDMENT RECORD

	Summary	Date	Author
1	First Revision	10/22	Mike Lavelle
2	2 nd Revision	05/23	Hilary Workman
3	3 rd Revision	05/23	Hilary Workman

DISTRIBUTION LIST

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Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU)	Suffolk.Emergency.Planning@suffolk.gov.uk	
Hard Copies		
Snatch pack- Memorial Hall, WI Hall		
Redacted Version		
Wickhambrook.org		
www.suffolkresilience.com/prepare-yourcommunity		

Introduction Wickhambrook is a parish town South of Bury St Edmunds with approximately 546 properties and 1200 residents.

Activation In the event of an emergency impacting the parish / community, the following residents, when safe to do so, will form an emergency coordination group to assess the impacts of the incident, activate the plan, coordinate the local response, inform, and support residents as far as is practical;

Name	Parish Role	Response Role	Landline	Mobile	Email
Mike Lavelle	Chair	EP Co-ordinator	07415390477	07415390477	Mike.lavelle@wickhambrook.org.uk
Paul Couzens	Vice - Chair	EP Lead	07995677432	07995677432	paul.couzens@wickhambrook.org.uk
Tracey Turner	Parish Councillor	Volunteer	01440 821565		tracey.turner@wickhambrook.org.uk

In the event of any local emergency, if there is **ANY threat to life, dial 999** and alert the emergency services (Police, Fire, or Ambulance) immediately. If there is no perceived threat to life, but you have **information** that may help the emergency services, **dial 101**.

On activation of the group, the group will contact the Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) / District Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO)

Office hours;

01284 763233

Out of hours;

01284 763252

Ensure that the call taker has your CEPG Name, callers name and appropriate contact details and request the Joint Emergency Planning Unit Duty Officer (EPDO) is notified.

PLEASE NOTE: In a widespread incident the EPDO is a single point of contact and may be supporting the wider LA response across the County and may not be able to respond to you immediately. 4 Version 1

Insurance

The Community Emergency Planning Group (CEPG) and CEPG volunteers will be covered by the relevant Local Authority's insurance under the following circumstances;

- The local authority has requested you activate your CEPG and plan.
- The CEPG volunteers are registered with the CEPG.
- The CEPG and volunteers, are under the direction of a local authority member of staff (This can be remotely), and the local authority receives regular updates of task progress / issues arising from the CEPG.
- They only carry out the actions / activities that have been authorised by the local authority.
- A record of the activities undertaken and volunteers employed in those tasks is maintained by the CEPG.
- Activities they have been asked to undertake must be commensurate to their skills and competency.
- Appropriate dynamic risk assessments are carried out.
- The use of motor vehicles is not covered by the local authority's insurance and it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that they have adequate and appropriate cover.

If you undertake activities that are not authorised by the local authority, then you need to determine whether your local Parish / Town Council's insurance policy covers these activities.

N.B. There are additional sections and appendices that you can add to make this plan more comprehensive. Details of these can be found in the Community Emergency Plan Guidance Notes which accompanies this template and can be obtained from your local Emergency Planning Officer.

Appendices

Appendix A – Introduction – Risks

Appendix B – Activation

Appendix C – Risk Areas

Appendix D - Roles & Responsibilities

Appendix E – Key Contacts

Appendix F – Resources

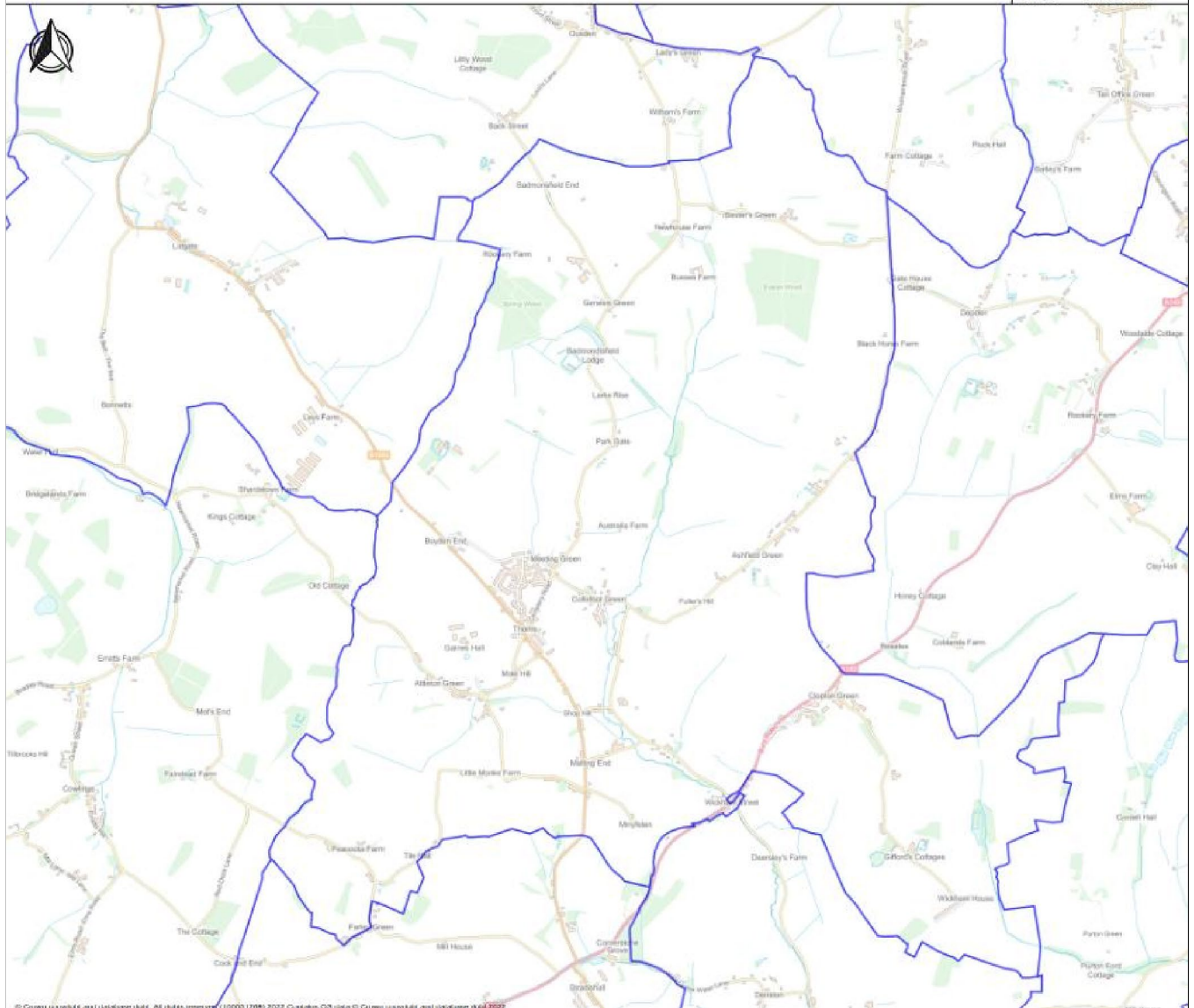
Appendix G – Debrief

Appendix H– Useful Form Templates

Appendix A

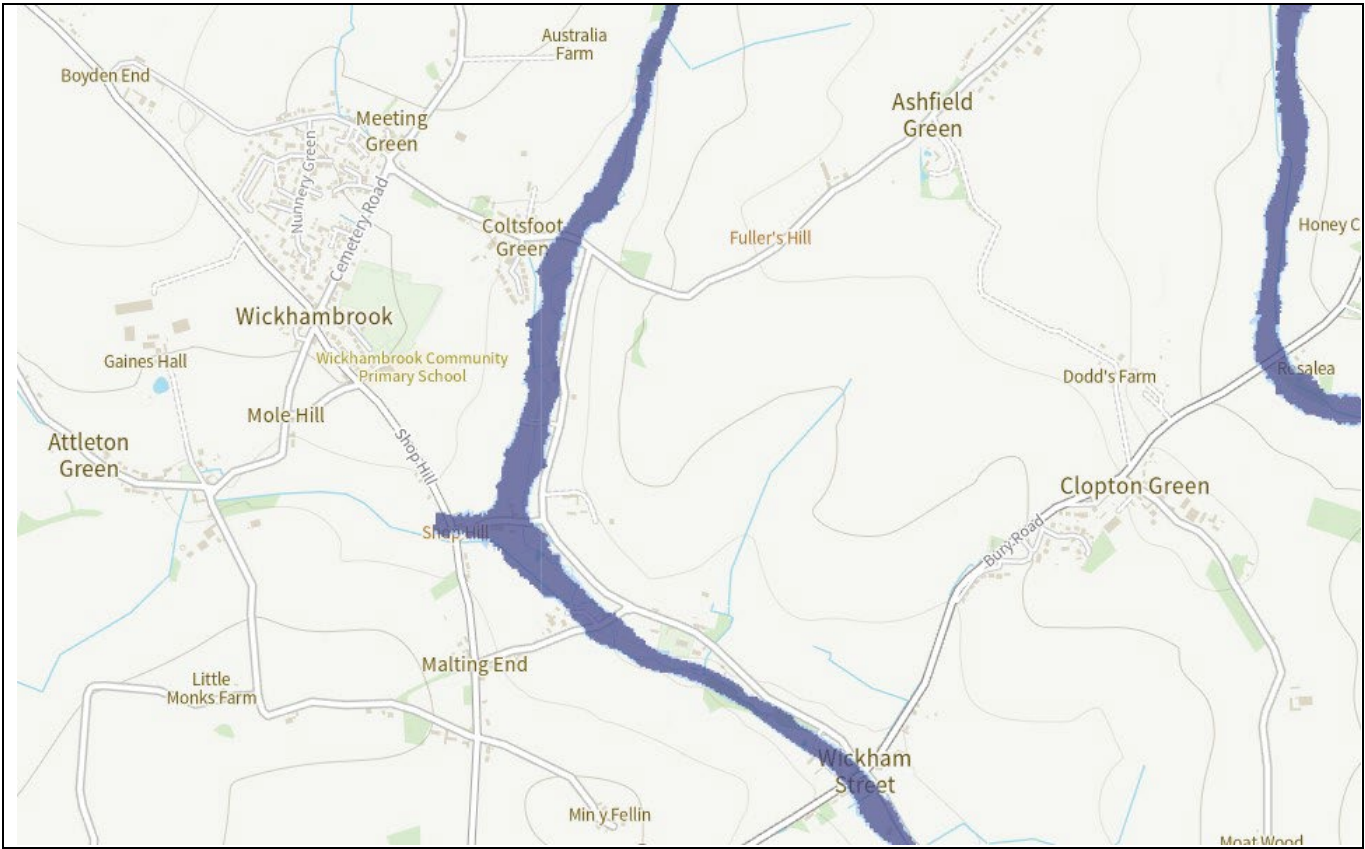
Introduction – Risks

Wickhambrook Parish Map



Wickhambrook Parish Council Key Locations

Description	Centroid	What3Words
Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre (Rest Centre)		///lurching.divisions.buzzer
Doctors Surgery		///scooters.saves.overpower
Wickhambrook Primary Academy		///crunches.visit.victor
Wickhambrook Post Office & Stores		///presuming.bandstand.fame
The Greyhound & 21		///guilty.chefs.committee
Fire Station, Clopton Green		///hacking.goes.grumbles
Sewerage Plant		///zipped.blissful.noting
Environment Agency Flood Risk Area		



It can be seen the key areas of risk of flooding are The Duddery and Cloak Lane to the Plumbers Arms.

Activation

The Community Emergency Plan will be activated, and the Community Emergency Group convened in one of two ways:

- At the request of the Emergency Services / Local Authorities or
- Where any member of the Group becomes aware of an arising Emergency or Community situation which is likely to affect residents within the Parish / Town area

In either case, once the plan is activated, the CEPG will liaise with the District Emergency Planning Officers in office hours / JEPU Duty Officer out of hours to fully appraise them of the situation.

Once activated you will receive an email confirming the activation and that you are then covered by the Local Authority or Emergency Services Insurance.

Contact details are in Appendix E and activation letter in Appendix H

The Emergency Services / Authorities which may request the activation of the Community Emergency Group are as follows:

- The Police
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Environment Agency
- Members of Suffolk County Council Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU)
- Military organisation such as bomb disposal.

Activation criteria include:

- Actual or threatened injury or loss of life, particularly if the threat is increasing or extensive
- Actual or threatened damage to property, particularly if the threat is increasing or extensive
- The causation is spread geographically, not located at a single property
- Having been requested to do so by the Emergency Services

On being activated the Group should convene a meeting to discuss the nature of the incident, potential or actual impact on the Community and the Community Resources required.

A sample agenda for the initial meeting is at Appendix H

The Community Emergency Group should ensure that all key actions / decisions taken by the Group are recorded.

A sample log page is at Appendix H

Community Emergency Group contact tree for notification / activation

Parish Council Chair- Mike Lavelle

Parish Council Vice - Chair- Paul Couzens

Parish Councillors (see list)

Wickhambrook Parish Clerk & Village Website contact- Hilary Workman (07508 039810)

Memorial Hall Custodian- Beverley Harding, Chair Steve Thwaite

WI Hall Custodian- Jackie Fieldsend (01440 820108)

Landlord- The Greyhound- Jack Couzens (01440 821017)

Risk Areas (as appropriate to be **carried out & held by Parish / Town Council / CEPG.**)

An assessment of the incident severity should be undertaken as quickly as possible. **It is of the highest importance to ensure that no one puts themselves at risk whilst this assessment is being undertaken.** The objective of this type of assessment is to determine whether there is a need to activate your plan, 'watch and wait' or remain in a 'business-as-usual' state.

Generic Risk Assessment

Whatever role individuals undertake appropriate and where necessary dynamic risk assessments should be carried out, prior to the task, to ensure all volunteers are not exposed to any unnecessary risks.

Consideration of appropriate personal protective equipment should be undertaken e.g. reflective jacket, suitable footwear, checking in, working in pairs etc. **AT NO POINT SHOULD ANYONE PUT THEMSELVES, OR OTHERS AT RISK OF DANGER.**

Risk Assessments are a continuous process and should reflect the changes in circumstances e.g. incident duration, feeding or providing overnight accommodation.

To carry out a risk assessment, you need to firstly identify what the hazards are and then look at the risks associated with those hazards.

Samples of activation letter and risk assessment form on Appendix H

Risks	Impact on community	What can Community Emergency Group do to prepare?
Flooding : Surface Water run off Ground Water River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding of local areas • Blocked Access • Damage to property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local flood risk areas – refer to flood risk map – • Sign up to Flood Warning Direct as a CEPG with the Environment Agency • Encourage residents to improve home flood defences and sign up to Flood Warning Direct as individual households https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings • Identify local shelters should residents need to evacuate their properties • Work with local emergency responders to see if you or they can help with distribution of flood warnings and any evacuation and rest centre establishment required • Find out what flood defences exist or are planned in the area Follow your Flood Action Card
Loss of Utilities	Total loss of electricity / water / gas supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on vulnerable people in the village • Liaise with UK Power Networks/Anglian Water / Transco
Roads Blocked	Inability to access or exit village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Farmers with Tractors and chainsaws etc • ACC Highways

Severe Weather	Casualties Damage to property Blocked roadway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid & check vulnerable people • Liaise with Local Authority, make area safe. • Organise urgent local road clearance.
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Appendix D

Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the ECG is to organise the activities of your CEPG during an emergency by assessing the situation, mobilising the appropriate local resources to support the community and maintaining links with the emergency services, the local authority and other responding organisations. Typical tasks associated with this may include the following roles:

Community Coordinator(s)

Members of the CEPG may be allocated areas, supported by other volunteers. Their role is to coordinate supporting volunteers doing tasks such as warning and informing, snow clearance or supporting vulnerable people, helping in a rest centre. Full contact details of the Community Coordinators should be placed in the key contacts directory **Rest Centre Coordinator**

The person(s) undertaking this role should have attended a local authority run rest centre course and is/are responsible for maintaining the safety and welfare of those residents and volunteers using the rest centre and should be in accordance with the local authority procedures. The Local Authority must be advised when a rest centre is provided so as to provide appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Full contact details of the Rest Centre Coordinators should be placed in the key contacts directory. All the forms necessary for running a rest centre can be found on the SRF website <https://www.suffolkresilience.com/prepare-your-community/communityemergency-planning-resources>

Contacts

Useful Contacts

Name	Role	Contact Number	email
Mike Lavelle	EP lead	07415390477	mike.lavelle@wickhambrook.org.uk
Paul Couzens	EP co Ordinator	07995677432	Paul.couzens@wickhambrook.org.uk
	Emergency Planning Duty Officer	01473 625376	
Wickhambrook Surgery	Medical	01440 820140	
Vets Practise	Vets	01234 956433	
Environment Agency	Floodline	0845 9881188	
Environment Agency	Hotline	0800 807060	
UK Power Networks	Electricity	0800 3163105	
National Grid	Overhead electricity lines issues	0800 404090	
Anglian Water	Water Supply	0800 771881	
Cadent	Gas	0800 111999	
Haverhill Constabulary	Police Services	01473 613500	
Wickhambrook Fire & Rescue	Paul Jolland	01440 820254	
West Suffolk Hospital	Bury St Edmunds	01284 713000	
NHS Direct		0845 4647	
West Suffolk Council	Daytime Out of hours	01284 763233 01284 763252	
West Suffolk Highways		0345 6066171	
Suffolk County Council		0345 6066171	
Hilary Workman	Parish Clerk	07508 039810	parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Resources

Depending on the extent or location of any particular incident, there are a number of facilities that could be used, these are listed in order of preference.

Key Buildings

Function	Location	Point of Contact	What3words/ Grid Ref
Rest Centre No 1	Memorial Hall		snowstorm,beams,acute
Rest Centre No 2	WI Hall		list,armrest,handsets
Rest Centre No 3	Wickhambrook School	The Head,	///crunches.visit.victor
Rest Centre No 4	The Greyhound	Jack Couzens	///guilty.chefs.committee
Suggested Helicopter Landing area	6 acres recreation ground	Memorial Hall, if available.	52.168623 0.551253

Local Skills ,Community Volunteers & Resources

Group	Name	Contact number	Special Skills
Lowland Rescue	A King ??	078345533555	Fast Water Rescue
Tree Felling	Suffolk Tree Surgery and Landscape	Tel: 01638 429451 Mob: 07534 792097	Tree Surgery
Farm Equipment			
Grounds Contractor			

Resources

Resource	Location	Contact	Contact out of hours
For an up to date directory of services, please use the link to Wickhambrook Biz https://wickhambrook.org/local-business/			

Neighbouring CEPG or Parish / Town Council

CEPG / Parish/ Town Council	Name	Website	Contact number
Lidgate Parish Council	Parish Clerk	lidgate.onesuffolk.net/	clerklidgatepc@gmail.com
Denston Parish Meeting	Chairman		01440 820310
Stradishal I Parish Council	Parish Clerk	https://stradishalparish.onesuffolk.net	stradishalparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk 07880 686069

Debrief (to be carried out post-event by **Parish / Town Council / CEPG** (Supported where practicable by Anyplace LA / EPO's – Anyplace Joint Emergency Planning Unit)

EXAMPLE OF DEBRIEF AGENDA

Area of Response	What Went Well	What Could be Improved
Notification/Alerting Issues		
Warning - Responding Agency and Public Issues.		
Activation of Plan		
Response Activities		
Training		
Capability		
Communications Issues		
Media Response Issues		
Recovery Issues		
Recommendations		

Initial Key Information Report

A. Major Incident Declaration	Yes / No	Time declared	Lead Agency	
B. Location (Where?)	Location by grid reference or postcode, or what3words, including road or geographic area.			
C. Nature of Emergency (What has happened?)	What has caused the problem? How has it happened? Are there any secondary hazards to be considered?			
D. Affected Area Scale or extent of affected area	Are there areas that require evacuation? Are these areas residential or commercial?			
E. Time (When did it happen?)				
F. Wind Direction obtainable from the Met Office	Blowing from:	Blowing to:	Wind Speed:	
G. Casualties / Affected people How many & where are they?	How many people are homeless or require evacuation. Where are they located? Do any have any disability problems?			
H. Locations access routes				
I. Locations of Forward Control Point / Tactical Coord Group / Strategic Coord Group	FCP	TCG	SCG	
J. Evacuation (Has evacuation taken place, where are the evacuees? How many people involved? If not, is evacuation likely?)	Is Evacuation in progress?	Is Evacuation likely?	Estimated evacuees	Location of evacuees
K. Warning and Informing (Contact Comms staff. Confirm which agency is leading on messages to the Media?)	SCC Comms		District / Borough Comms	
K. Community Emergency Planning Group (CEPG) Is a CEPG available to assist?	Contact name	Organisation	Time	Contact details
L. Any other relevant information	Are there other Local Authority resources that might be required e.g. building control, environmental health or protection, road closure?			

Wickhambrook CEPG Meeting Agenda

Date:

Time:

Location:

Attendees:

1. What is the current situation?

You might want to consider the following:

Location of the emergency. Is it near:

- A school?
- A vulnerable area?
- A main access route?
- Type of emergency:
- Is there a threat to life?
- Has electricity, gas or water been affected?

Are there any vulnerable people involved?

- Elderly
- Families with children
- People with disabilities
- Non English speaking people

What resources do we need?

- Food?
- Off-road vehicles?
- Blankets?
- Shelter?
- Power; Note that without power, internet routers will not work.

2. Establish contact with the local authority/ emergency services?

3. What support can we offer to the local authority/emergency services?

4. What actions can safely be taken?

5. Who is going to take the lead for the agreed actions?

6. Any other issues?

CEPG Risk Assessment Form

Location				Date:	Review date:			
Risk Assessors Name:				Job title:				
Task / Hazard Identified	No of persons at risk			What is risk?	Risk rating			
					I	L	Risk	Action to remedy
Impact multiplied by Likelihood = Risk Rating: 16 = Very High, 8-12 = High, 4-6 = Medium, 0-3 = Low								

identified as High or Very High that cannot be readily or easily mitigated or excluded must be considered as a potential reason to look at alternative premises. Any such risks so identified need to be brought to the earliest attention of the LA H&S Officer for their professional consideration / advice.

