



# **Buckland & Chipping Parish Council**

Clerk: Sarah Kubica

e mail: [clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk)

[www.bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](http://www.bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk)

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**MEETING No 343 of BUCKLAND & CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Buckland**

**To: Cllrs Jeff Kenyon, Penny Baxter-Newman (Vice), Helen Dauris, Mark Seymour**

**You are summoned to attend Meeting No 343 to transact the business on this agenda.**

*S Kubica*

S Kubica,

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Clerk to Buckland and Chipping Parish Council**

*To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, members requiring further information or clarification on items included on the agenda are requested to enquire prior to the meeting.*

## **AGENDA**

**343.1 Election of Chairman**

To elect a Chairman for the year 2026/27 and sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

**343.2 Co-option**

To review applications for the vacancy of Buckland and Chipping Parish Councillor

**343.3 Election of Vice-Chairman**

To elect a Vice-Chairman for the year 2026/27 and sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

**343.4 Apologies for absence**

To receive and accept apologies for absence.

**343.5 Declarations of Interest and dispensations**

1. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
2. To receive and consider members' written requests for dispensations for declarable interests; and
3. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

**343.6 Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of Buckland and Chipping Ordinary Parish Council Meeting 342, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 as an accurate record of proceedings

**343.7 Appointment of Representatives**

To appoint representatives to serve on Committees, outside bodies and working Parties.

**343.8 Reports to the Council**

To receive reports from representatives on outside bodies, local authorities and agencies

1. Crime Report February, March & April 2026

**343.9 Public Comments: Limited to 15 minutes**

Members of the public and councillors can raise matters of concern.

**343.10 Finance**

1. To note receipt of income
2. To receive summary report of receipts and payments against budget
3. To receive bank reconciliation & year end bank reconciliation
4. To approve insurance renewal by Zurich Municipal for 2026-27 £566.60 (we are in a 4 year agreement until 2029)
5. To note that the VAT return for 31st March 2026 has been submitted
6. To authorise payments made in accordance with the budget
7. Bank Mandate
8. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26  
Audit requirements for the year ending 2025/26
  1. To approve the Annual Accounts 2025/26
  2. To approve the Certificate of Exemption 2025/26
  3. To receive the Annual Internal Auditor Report for the year 2025/26
  4. To approve Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
  5. To approve Section 2, Accounting Statements 2025/26
  6. To agree the dates for the public rights period, 3<sup>rd</sup> June – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026

**343.11 Planning**

To receive a planning report on applications and decisions

**343.12 Council Documents**

To consider, review and agree council policies and documents

1. To review Code of Conduct
2. To review Complaints Procedure
3. To review Data Protection Policy
4. To review Disciplinary Policy
5. To review Financial Regulations
6. To review Freedom of Information Policy
7. To review Grievance Policy
8. To review General Reserves Policy
9. To review Retention of Documents
10. To review Scheme of Delegation and Records Policy
11. To review Standing Orders
12. To adopt IT Policy
13. Agree Accessibility Statement

**343.13 Reports from Working Parties and Committees, Parish Matters**

1. Bench in the church, confirming location
2. Feedback from April public meeting on A10
3. Chipping Litter Picker
4. June Newsletter:
  1. to discuss content
  2. to agree an editor
  3. to agree delivery date
5. Autumn celebrations

**343.14 To note items for future agendas:** and to receive any other items for future consideration

**343.15 Date of next Parish Council Meeting: 7.30pm, Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2026, St Andrew's Church, Buckland**



# **Buckland & Chipping Parish Council**

Clerk: Caroline Scott, Lye End Farm, Sandon, Herts, SG9 0RS

Tel: 07542 758 948

e mail: clerk@bucklandandchipping.org.uk

www.bucklandandchipping.org.uk

## **MEETING No 342 of BUCKLAND & CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Ordinary Parish Council Meeting**

**Monday 2nd March 2026, 7.30pm in The Manor House, Buntingford**

**Present: Cllrs Jeff Kenyon (Chair), Penny Baxter-Newman (Vice), Helen Dauris, Mark Seymour**

**Attending: C Scott (Clerk), 2 parishioners, 1 member of the public**

### **Minutes**

Meeting opened 19:33

#### **342.1 Apologies for absence**

**To receive and accept apologies for absence.**

**None**

#### **342.2 Declarations of Interest and dispensations**

1. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
2. To receive and consider members' written requests for dispensations for declarable interests (if any)
3. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

**None**

#### **342.3 Minutes:**

1. To confirm the minutes of Buckland and Chipping Ordinary Parish Council Meeting 341, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026 as an accurate record of proceedings **Resolved Proposed Cllr P Baxter Newman, seconded Cllr M Seymour**

#### **342.4 Reports to the Council**

To receive reports from representatives on outside bodies, local authorities and agencies

1. Crime Report 2026 – no crimes reported in either village during January 2026  
Speed control in the villages – A discussion was had with all members of the Council and members of the public. Clerk to chase the progress of lowering the limit on the Barkway Road within the village. Hold a further meeting with HCllr, police and highways. The proposed meeting will be open to the public and also virtually accessible. A Saturday afternoon in St Andrew's Church was suggested.

HCllr T Smith arrived 20:04

2. HCllr T Smith reported about putting forward the speed cameras within the village, Sandon School has been reprieved until September 2026.

**342.5 Public Comments: Limited to 15 minutes**

Members of the public and councillors can raise matters of concern related to agenda items.

**342.6 Finance**

1. To note receipt of income - **noted**
2. To receive summary report of receipts and payments against budget - **noted**
3. To receive bank reconciliation - **received**
4. To consider price quotations, charges and grant requests – **none received**
5. To authorise payments made in accordance with the budget – **Resolved Cllr H Dauris, Cllr P Baxter-Newman all payments to be paid except Linards until an invoice is received**
6. To agree Asset register – gazebo at Ashford Cottage – **Resolved proposed Cllr J Kenyon, Cllr M Seymour**
7. To agree audit plan – **resolved Cllr J Kenyon, Cllr P Baxter-Newman**

**342.7 Planning**

To receive a planning report on applications and decisions

**342.8 Reports from Working Parties and Committees**

1. Report back from meeting with PCC – Cllr J Kenyon attended the meeting and they are very happy with the grass cutting, Council to confirm no concrete was going to be used under it, it will be locked and under our insurance, no services will be required for the container. Clerk to contact Chair of PCC to confirm these items. The Church Conservation Trust was discussed, they are now using the south entrance of the church and so would like to look into a new lighting for both west and south entrances of the church.
2. March/April Newsletter:
  1. to discuss content -
  2. to agree an editor – Cllr M Seymour
  3. to agree delivery date – 11<sup>th</sup> April
3. Summer event – very little response for volunteers and therefore not enough to put on an event this year.

**342.9 Parish Clerk vacancy:** update and to consider excluding public and press under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 for the discussion of confidential business

**Public were asked to leave. Resolved to offer S Kubica the position of Clerk starting May 2026 proposed Cllr J Kenyon, seconded Cllr M Seymour**

**342.10 To note items for future agendas:** And to receive any other items for future consideration

**342.11 Date of next Parish Council Meeting: 7.30 pm, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026, St Andrew's Church, Buckland.  
Meeting closed 21:00**



## Neighbourhood Policing Report APRIL 2026

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES – Does not include reports for domestic incidents, mental health, child protection investigations, or sexual offences. Not all reported incidents end up being recorded as crimes and will therefore not appear on the report.

### ASPENDEN

- 1x Public Order Offence – Civil dispute.

### BRAUGHING

- 1x Theft of Trailer – Reported in error by owner.
- 1x Possession Class B - Community Resolution issued.
- 1x Public Order Offence – Suspect identified, under investigation.

### BUCKLAND

- 1x Criminal Damage to Vehicle – Community Resolution issued.

### BUNTINGFORD

- 1x Theft of Motor Vehicle - No suspects identified.
- 2x Common Assault – 1x No suspects identified. 1x Suspect identified, victim unsupportive.
- 5x Criminal Damage – 1x Suspects identified, under investigation. 2x Under investigation. 2x No suspects identified.
- 2x Criminal Damage to Vehicle – 2x No suspects identified, under investigation.
- 1x Attempted Theft of Motor Vehicle – No suspects identified.
- 1x Assault Constable – 1x Suspect conditional caution.
- 3x Possession Class B -- 1x Suspect conditional caution, 2x Community Resolutions issued.
- 2x Assault occasioning actual bodily harm – 2x No suspects identified, victim unsupportive.
- 1x Residential Burglary – No suspects identified.
- 1x Business Burglary – Theft of metal, under investigation.
- 4x Theft from Shops – 1x Suspect arrested and interviewed. 1x Youth suspects identified and letters of apology written. 1x Vehicle identified, under investigation. 1x No suspects identified.
- 2x Theft from a Person – 1x Suspects identified, under investigation. 1x Suspects identified, school dealing.
- 1x Attempted Burglary – Suspects identified, under investigation.
- 1x Theft of Mail – No suspects identified, In Post dealing.
- 1x Harassment – Neighbour dispute.

### CHIPPING

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### PUCKERIDGE

- 1x Theft of Pedal Cycle – No suspects identified.
- 2x Criminal Damage to Vehicle – 2x No suspects identified, under investigation.
- 1x Assault occasioning actual bodily harm – Suspect identified, victim unsupportive.
- 2x Theft of Motor Vehicle – 1x Civil dispute. 1x Linked to other offences.
- 1x Theft from Shops – No suspects identified.
- 1x Attempted Kidnapping – Possibly linked to other offences, under investigation.

### STANDON

- 1x Assault Constable occasioning actual bodily harm – 1x Suspect arrested and interviewed.

## **THROCKING**

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## **WYDDIAL**

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### **Other news and updates:**

The Neighbourhood Policing Team are still actively working to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour locally. We are aware of a recent post on social media regarding this, attracting 60+ comments, some of which alleged various incidents had been reported to police, but not dealt with. The incidents referred to in the post have NOT been reported to police. We actively investigate all incidents and crimes that have been properly reported. Some of these are ongoing investigations or are in the process of action being taken. In the past month, the team, working alongside our dedicated ASB and Young Persons Units, and relevant housing associations and schools, have done the following:-

- Youth suspects involved in Criminal Damage and Attempted Burglary have been identified and are due to be interviewed.
- Youth suspects involved in assault have been identified and are due to be interviewed.
- ASB offenders and suspects involved in a theft have been dealt with robustly by their school, with the victims satisfied that no further action from police is required.
- 1x Community Protection Notice issued to repeat young offender who has breached their Community Protection Warning. Further breaches may result in arrest and court proceedings.
- 1x Community Protection Warning issued to repeat young offender.
- Various housing associations have written to parents of repeat offenders, reminding the tenants that acts of anti-social behaviour by members of their households, are potentially a breach of their tenancy agreements.
- Parents of identified children riding their bicycles in an anti-social and/or dangerous manner have been written and/or spoken to.
- Ongoing targeted patrols of hotspot areas at key times when the Neighbourhood Team are on duty.
- Herts Connected surveys and appeals sent to local registered residents encouraging them to report incidents of ASB.

We are also aware of the use of e-bikes in Buntingford, with a couple of the riders having previously made off from police. Research and intelligence gathering is ongoing to identify the riders and where these bikes may be located.

In other news, the team have:-

- Arrested two males acting suspiciously at a property in the Pelhams. Officers immediately recognised them as burglary suspects linked to multiple incidents stretching across Essex and Hertfordshire.

- Investigated several fly tips, identifying potential offenders.
- Seized a van that failed to stop for police in Buntingford for no insurance. Further investigation found Class A and B drugs in the vehicle.
- Seized an e-Scooter being ridden in Buntingford.
- Identified and found the driver of a vehicle who crashed into road signs on the A10 Buntingford.
- Identified several vehicles reportedly involved in cannabis use and/or supply in Buntingford. Three vehicles have been stopped and dealt with so far.
- Caught and sanctioned a young person with an off-road motorcycle.
- Assisted with evidence capture for two serious sexual assaults in Bishops Stortford.

The constabulary are particularly keen for local people to give us feedback on policing via the Herts Connected surveys. We will be looking to set our policing priorities for the upcoming quarter and would very much appreciate if you could share the link and QR code below on social media:-

<https://bit.ly/hertspolice-psf>



If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999, for all others please use 101 or online reporting <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The Herts Connected system delivers Hertfordshire police's crime alerts. Registered local residents can receive the latest crime or emergency updates and alerts, as well as information about policing events in your area. Local residents can get involved in helping to make their local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in their area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

The more residents that register, the better informed and safer our communities will be. We would be most grateful if you could continue to share the link below in any parish communications, and especially on social media, to encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up.

<https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/>

Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Additional Crime Prevention Advice can be found via this link:

<https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/> Thank you

East Herts Rural Highlights Video 2024-25

<https://youtu.be/bnf6PE4uuvc?feature=shared>

# Neighbourhood Policing Report FEBRUARY 2026

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## ASPENDEN

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## BRAUGHING

- 1x Criminal Damage to Vehicle – No suspects identified.
- 1x Burglary (Residential) - No suspects identified, enquiries ongoing.

## BUCKLAND

- 1x Fly Tip – Potential address discovered, ongoing investigation by Environment Agency.

## BUNTINGFORD

- 1x Criminal Damage to Vehicle – Suspect identified, passed to Young Persons Team.
- 3x Criminal Damage – No suspects identified.
- 6x Theft from Shops – 5x suspects identified, 2x arrested, 3x passed to Young Persons Team, 1x identity to be confirmed.
- 1x Harassment – Suspect identified.
- 3x Common Assault – Suspects identified, ongoing issue between known parties.
- 1x Actual Bodily Harm - Suspect identified, due for interview.
- 1x Possession of Class C – 1x Community Resolutions issued.
- 1x Theft of Parcel – No suspects identified.
- 1x Dog Dangerously Out of Control – Suspect identified, enquiries ongoing.

## CHIPPING

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## PUCKERIDGE

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## STANDON

- 1x Possession of Bladed Article – Under investigation.
- 1x Theft of Mail – No suspects identified.
- 1x Attempted Burglary (Business) - No suspects identified, under investigation.
- 1x Theft of Motor Vehicle – Vehicle recovered, no suspects identified, under investigation.

## THROCKING

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## WYDDIAL

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

**Other news and updates:**

The Neighbourhood Policing Team have had a busy month with several positive results.

- At the beginning of February, the team seized yet another vehicle linked to hare coursing.
- A quad bike and off road bike being used illegally and linked to criminal damage were seized.
- 5x juvenile suspects linked to shoplifting and anti-social behaviour were dealt with, two arrested, and three sanctioned and handed over to our Young Persons Team.
- As part of Op Agrarian, we had 1x arrest for drug drive, 1x arrest for immigration offences, 2x Community Resolutions issued for possession of Class B.

A video was produced highlighting the diverse and busy year we've had policing East Herts during 2025: <https://youtu.be/tf6Ce8G7Qvc?si=k91vPaxX-GAV1PoH>

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the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

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## Neighbourhood Policing Report MARCH 2026

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### ASPENDEN

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### BRAUGHING

- 1x Theft of Lamps – 1x suspect arrested and interviewed.

### BUCKLAND

- 1x Fly Tip – Potential address discovered, ongoing investigation by Environment Agency.

### BUNTINGFORD

- 1x Residential Burglary – No suspects identified.
- 1x Aggravated Burglary – Theft of tools and metal. Under investigation.
- 1x Criminal Damage to Fields – Suspected hare coursing/poaching. No suspects identified.
- 1x Criminal Damage – No suspects identified.
- 2x Theft from Shops – No suspects identified.
- 1x Public Order Offence – No suspect identified.
- 2x Possession With Intent to Supply Class a – 2x suspect arrested, enquiries ongoing.
- 2x Theft from a Person – 1x suspects identified, under investigation. 1x debit card used, no suspects identified.
- 1x Theft from a Motor Vehicle – No suspects identified.
- 1x Dog Dangerously Out of Control – No suspect identified.
- 1x Common Assault – 1x suspect identified, enquiries ongoing.
- 1x Assault on a Constable/Obstruction – 1x suspect arrested, interviewed and charged.
- 1x Theft – Plant/equipment taken some time between October 2025 and March 2026. No suspects identified.
- 1x Harassment – Under investigation.

### CHIPPING

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### PUCKERIDGE

- 1x Possession of Offensive Weapon – 1x suspect identified, enquiries ongoing.
- 1x Criminal Damage – 1x suspect arrested and interviewed.
- 1x Going Equipped to Steal – 1x suspect arrested and interviewed.
- 1x Possession Class A – 1x suspect arrested, under investigation.
- 

### STANDON

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### THROCKING

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

### WYDDIAL

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES

## Other news and updates:

The Neighbourhood Policing Team have travelled far and wide these past couple of weeks, including arresting a wanted individual arriving at Heathrow Airport, and visiting various addresses in north and east London connected to fly tips on our patch, with appropriate sanctions issued to offenders. Locally, officers have seized uninsured vehicles, and as part of their drive against ASB in Buntingford, have been carrying out focused patrols in hotspot areas. One offender, who currently has conditions NOT to be in the area, was quickly located by the team. After a brief foot chase, he was caught and escorted back to his home address, having been made well aware that further breaches could result in them being remanded in custody.

A joint effort saw officers from the Buntingford and Ware teams attend a report of a serious and dangerous dog attack in Westmill. The initial actions of the officers saw them face off with the offending dog, breaking it's attack. Officers gave life-saving first aid to a seriously injured Labrador puppy, before blue-lighting it to a vets for further life-saving surgery. After a touch-and-go few days, the puppy is happily now on the long road to recovery. The owner was quickly caught and arrested at the scene of the incident, whilst the offending dog was located and put to sleep by vets.

A multi-agency meeting took place to discuss longer term solutions to the problem of youth ASB in Buntingford and several referrals have been made, with options being looked at to help reduce incidents locally.

The constabulary are particularly keen for local people to give us feedback on policing via the Herts Connected surveys. We will be looking to set our policing priorities for the upcoming quarter and would very much appreciate if you could share the link and QR code below on social media:-

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Mrs Caroline Scott  
Buckland and Chipping Parish Council  
Lye End Farm  
Mill End  
Sandon  
Buntingford  
Hertfordshire  
SG9 0RS

## Select for Local Councils Policy Schedule

This insurance policy, which meets your demands and needs, has been based on the latest information obtained from you. The Policy, the Policy Schedule, any Certificates of Insurance and Endorsements form one document and should be read together. This Schedule replaces any previous Schedule.

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Policy Number  | YLL-2720863633                       |
| Insured  | Buckland and Chipping Parish Council |
| Business   | Parish / Town Council                |
| Period of Insurance  |                                      |
| From   | 01 <sup>st</sup> June 2026           |
| To   | 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2027            |
| and any other period for which cover has been agreed.                      |                                      |
| Renewal Premium  | £ 566.60                             |
| Premiums are inclusive of Insurance Premium Tax and/or VAT as appropriate. |                                      |
| Schedule Number  | 169124216                            |
| Long term agreement active until   | 01 <sup>st</sup> June 2028           |
| Preparation Date   | 06 <sup>th</sup> April 2026          |
| Prepared by  | Mr Matthew Murray                    |
| Policy Form Reference  | MLAACH10                             |

### Policy Cover Declaration:

You, the Insured, are not aware of any known losses or events that could give rise to a claim, or circumstances that would be prejudicial to us, the Insurer, should the basis of cover on the below given insurance product (s) be changed.

This is important information, please read it carefully and check that the facts given about you are correct and that we have included all the covers that you require. We are unable to give you advice so it is your responsibility to check the cover is correct for your organisation.

## Statement of Fact

If you provide services or activities to children, or adults who are in need of care and support and therefore may be unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect:

- Your organisation has not had any third-party inspections with a grading of Inadequate, Requires Urgent Improvement, Weak or Unsatisfactory
- You have in place a written safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures that clearly set out the actions to take in response to child and vulnerable adult abuse
- You carry out safer recruitment and selection processes that include the seeking of appropriate criminal records checks, alongside a renewal and update process
- All Employees and **volunteers** engaged in regulated activity and/or activity that brings them into contact with children or vulnerable adults receive safeguarding awareness training including refresher training
- You have one or more designated practitioners for safeguarding to support other practitioners in the organisation to recognise and respond to concerns about Abuse
- You retain employment records, safeguarding checks, safeguarding policies and procedures and safeguarding records for at least the prevailing regulatory best practice period.

If you provide services or activities to children, or adults who are in need of care and support and therefore may be unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, and you become non-compliant with any of the above statements, you must tell us, as it may affect your ability to claim under this policy.

## Important information

### Taking reasonable care

We require that you take reasonable care in managing your activities. Where appropriate this requires you to do the following:

- Keep written risk assessments for your key activities
- Keep written records of your staff and volunteer training. For example, manual handling training, or for use of tools and machinery
- Abide by any rules, guidelines or advice that is given to you by any relevant authority, such as a Local Authority, or the Health and Safety Executive

We want you to be confident about your insurance and understand what is required of you. Please contact us if you have any questions relating to the above.

## Lines of Cover applying

### Part C – All risks

#### Table Headings

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Contents (a) | Furniture, fixtures, fittings and tenants improvements  |
| Contents (b) | Other Contents and consumable stock not specified below including printed books and unused stationery                       |
| Contents (c) | Computer Equipment, other office equipment and sports equipment   |
| Contents (d) | Televisions, audio-visual and photographic equipment (excluding videos), beer, wine, spirits, tools and gardening equipment |
| Contents (e) | Tobacco   |
| Contents (f) | Camcorders, videos and gaming machines  |
| Contents (g) | Civic Regalia   |

#### Additional Items:

Where no premises address is shown, the item is not based at one location and cover is provided anywhere within the **territorial limits**.

| Item Description         | Sum Insured | Excess |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------|
| Outdoor Equipment        | £41,279.54  | £100   |
| Office Equipment         | £2,053.29   | £100   |
| Gala Tent and accesories | £3,086.95   | £100   |
| Tables and benches       | £2,300.25   | £100   |
| Large Table Trolley      | £474.09     | £100   |
| Staging and accesories   | £2,767.23   | £100   |
| BBQ                      | £2,458.11   | £100   |

The excess stated applies to each and every loss.

**Operative Endorsements:** 1, 2, 3 & 7 (please refer to the Endorsement section of the policy wording)

**Part E – Public liability**

**Limit of Indemnity:** £12,000,000

**Operative Endorsements: None**

**Part G – Employers liability**

**Limit of Indemnity:** £10,000,000

**Operative Endorsements:**

None

**Part H – Libel and slander**

**Sum Insured**

£250,000

**Excess:** 10% each and every claim or £1,000 whichever is the lower

**Operative Endorsements**

None

**Part N – Fidelity guarantee**

**Persons Guaranteed:**  
 All members and employees

**Sum Guaranteed**  
 £250,000

**Excess:** £100 each and every loss

**Operative Endorsements:**

None

**Part O – Personal accident**

| The cover |                           |   |
|-----------|---------------------------|---|
| Category: | Insured Persons:          | Operative Time:   |
| A         | Employees                 | Engaged in Usual Occupation including Journeys and whilst commuting directly between place of residence and usual place of <b>business</b>                |
| B         | <b>member</b>             | Engaged in the <b>business</b> including undertaking Journeys and whilst commuting directly between place of residence and usual place of <b>business</b> |
| C         | <b>volunteer</b>          | Engaged in the <b>business</b> including undertaking Journeys and whilst commuting directly between place of residence and usual place of <b>business</b> |
| D         | key personnel as follows: | 24 hours per day engaged in any activity worldwide not excluded from this cover.  |

| Excesses  |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| Excesses: | Not applicable |

| Table of benefits  |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Benefit:   | Category:   |             |             |             |
|  | A           | B           | C           | D           |
| 1. Death   | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £Nil        |
| 2. Loss of Limb (one or more) and/or Loss of Sight (in one or both eyes) | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £Nil        |
| 3A. Total Loss of Hearing (in both ears) and/or Total Loss of Speech     | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £Nil        |
| 3B. Total Loss of Hearing in one ear                                     | 25% of 3A   | 25% of 3A   | 25% of 3A   | 25% of 3A   |
| 4. Permanent Total Disablement   | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £50,000.00  | £Nil        |
| 5. Permanent Partial Disablement   | See section | See section | See section | See section |

|  |  |                  |                  |                 |
|--|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|  | 2.16   | 2.16             | 2.16             | 2.16            |
| 6. Paraplegia                            | £75,000  | £75,000          | £75,000          | £Nil            |
| 7. Quadriplegia                          | £125,000   | £125,000         | £125,000         | £Nil            |
| 8. Temporary Total Disablement           | £200.00 per week   | £200.00 per week | £200.00 per week | £Nil            |
| 9. Temporary Partial Disablement         | 50% of 8 or Nil  | 50% of 8 or Nil  | 50% of 8 or Nil  | 50% of 8 or Nil |
| Benefit Period – temporary disablement   | 104 weeks  | 104 weeks        | 104 weeks        | 104 weeks       |
| Deferment Period – temporary disablement | 0 days   | 0 days           | 0 days           | 0 days          |
| <b>Operative endorsements</b>            |  |                  |                  |                 |
| Endorsement title:                       | Endorsement wording:   |                  |                  |                 |
| 1  | Special Exclusion 2 of Section 3 is inoperative provided always that the <b>insurer</b> will not make any payment of any benefit or in respect of any expense or loss arising from any Person Insured who has attained the age of 90 years unless such expense or loss arises during the period of insurance during which the Person Insured attains the age of 90 |                  |                  |                 |

**Part P – Legal expenses****Insured Incidents:**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Employment Disputes and Compensation Awards | Operative   |
| 2. Legal Defence                               | Operative   |
| 3. Statutory Licence Appeal                    | Operative   |
| 4. Contract Disputes                           | Inoperative |
| 5. Debt Recovery                               | Inoperative |
| 6. Property Protection and Bodily Injury       | Operative   |
| 7. Tax Protection                              | Operative   |

**Limit of Indemnity:** £100,000

**Operative Endorsements: None**

## General Notes

### 1. Fair presentation of the risk

You must make a fair presentation of the risk to us at inception, renewal and variation of your policy. This means that we must be told about all facts and circumstances which may be material to the risks covered by the policy and that you must not make a misrepresentation to us about any material facts. As part of your duty of fair presentation, you must ensure that the information detailed within the schedule is correct and complete. A material fact is one which would influence the acceptance or assessment of the risk. If you have any doubt about facts considered material, it is in your interests to disclose them to us.

Failure to make a fair presentation of the risk could result in the policy either being avoided, written on different terms or a higher premium being charged, depending on the circumstances surrounding the failure to present the risk fairly.

This policy is compliant with the principles of the Insurance Act 2015 law reforms. It also incorporates an 'opt out' which has the aim to promote good customer outcomes. We have opted-out of the 'proportionate reduction of claim remedy' available to insurers under the Insurance Act 2015. This means that in cases of non-disclosure or misrepresentation which are neither deliberate nor reckless, if we would have charged an additional premium had we known the relevant facts, we will charge that premium and pay any claims in full rather than reducing claims payments in proportion to the amount of premium that would have been charged.

We believe that our 'additional premium approach' should, in most situations, be more favourable to our customers when compared to the proportionate reduction of claim remedy. Our additional premium approach does not affect our right to apply the other remedies available under the Act for non-disclosure or misrepresentation.

### 2. Cancellation

All insurance policies run for a fixed period of time. The Insured can terminate an insurance contract verbally or in writing at any time by calling 0800 917 9531 or emailing [Customers.team@uk.zurich.com](mailto:Customers.team@uk.zurich.com). Zurich may cancel the policy by giving 30 days' notice in writing. In such an event the insured will be entitled to a return of premium in respect of the unexpired portion of the period of insurance.

If you cancel your policy before the start date, you will be entitled to a full refund of premium. If you cancel within 14 days of the start date, you will be entitled to a full refund of premium, providing no claim has been made. After 14 days, if no claim has been made, we may offer a full or partial refund, depending on the time the policy was on risk and the circumstances at the time of the cancellation request. Please note, a cancellation charge of £50 may be applied.

### 3. Bonus and fee structure

Employees and businesses who carry out work for ZIC UK are remunerated in various different ways for selling insurance contracts. Employees receive a basic salary and also receive a bonus based on a number of factors, including the achievement of sales and quality targets. Businesses which work for the insurer on an outsourced basis receive a fee and also additional payments based on a number of factors, including the achievement of sales and quality targets.

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Zurich Insurance Company Ltd is authorised and regulated in Switzerland by the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority are available from us on request. Our firm reference number is 959113.

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**Buckland and Chipping Parish Council**

Form 126 Schedule - VAT between 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026

| Invoice Date  | Organisation on Invoice      | Supplier VAT Reg No | Supplier                   | Desc                 | VAT            |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 03/04/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish |                     | Defib Store                | Property Maintenance | 43.00          |
| 04/04/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish |                     | Defib Store                | Expenses             | 54.20          |
| 06/05/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | 165118712           | Beracah                    | Assets               | 3.41           |
| 21/05/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | GB214430802         | East Hertfordshire Council | Dog bin              | 131.91         |
| 22/06/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish |                     | Finesse UK Plumbing        | BBQ adaptation       | 30.00          |
| 20/08/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | GB926762203         | TEEC Ltd                   | Administration       | 6.00           |
| 03/10/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | GB926762203         | TEEC Ltd                   | Administration       | 31.20          |
| 09/10/2025  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | GB455932328         | Tapp's Fireworks           | Event Expenses       | 67.65          |
| 12/01/2026  | Buckland and Chipping Parish |                     | Gareth White Electricals   | Property Maintenance | 28.00          |
| 25/03/2026  | Buckland and Chipping Parish | GB606898500         | TP Jones & Co Ltd          | Administration       | 13.77          |
| <b>Amount of VAT you can claim for this period is</b> |                              |                     |                            |                      | <b>£409.14</b> |

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 2

To be completed only by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other smaller authorities\* where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less, that meet the qualifying criteria, and that wish to CERTIFY themselves as EXEMPT from a limited assurance review

## Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England where the higher of gross income **or** gross expenditure was £25,000 or less **must**, after the end of each financial year, complete Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices*, unless the authority:
  - a) does not meet the qualifying criteria for exemption; or
  - b) does not wish to certify itself as exempt
2. Smaller authorities where the higher of all gross annual income **or** gross annual expenditure **does not exceed** £25,000 and that meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption **are able to declare themselves exempt** from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review **provided** the authority **completes**:
  - a) The **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3 and returns a copy of it to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Failure to do so will result in reminder letter(s) for which the Authority will be charged £40 +VAT for each letter; and
  - b) The **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Form 2)** which is made up of:
    - c) **Annual Internal Audit Report (page 4)** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
    - d) **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement (page 5)** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
    - e) **Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 6)** **must** be completed and approved by the authority. **NOTE: Authorities certifying themselves as exempt SHOULD NOT send the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor.**
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement **before** approving Section 2 Accounting Statements and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026**

## Publication Requirements

Smaller authorities **must** publish various documents on a publicly available website as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. These include:

- **Certificate of Exemption**, page 3
- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26**, page 4
- **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26**, page 5
- **Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26**, page 6
- Analysis of variances
- Bank reconciliation
- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

## Limited Assurance Review

Any smaller authority may request a limited assurance review. If so, the authority should not certify itself as exempt or complete the Certificate of Exemption. Instead it should complete Form 3 of the AGAR 2025/26 and return it to the external auditor together with the supporting documentation requested by the external auditor. The cost to the authority for the review will be **£210 +VAT**.

Provided that the authority certifies itself as exempt, and completes and publishes the documents listed under 'Publication Requirements', there is no requirement for the authority to have a review.

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

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

# Guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26, Sections 1 and 2

- An authority that wishes to declare itself exempt from the requirement for a limited assurance review **must** do so at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2026. It should not submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor. However, as part of a more proportionate regime, the authority **must** comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The Certificate of Exemption **must** be returned to the external auditor no later than **30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT for each letter.
- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. Proper Practices are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness at the meeting at which it is signed off.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- The authority **must** publish numerical and narrative explanations for significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 6**. Guidance is provided in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which may assist.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026)
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights for a single period of 30 working days for inspection ( this excludes weekends and public Holidays) which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish, on the authority website/webpage, the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

| Completion checklist – ‘No’ answers mean you may not have met requirements |   | Yes | No |
|--|---|-----|----|
| All sections   | Have all highlighted boxes been completed?  |     |    |
|  | Have the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights been published?   |     |    |
| Internal Audit Report  | Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?  |     |    |
| Section 1  | For any statement to which the response is ‘no’, is an explanation available for publication?   |     |    |
| Section 2  | Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?                         |     |    |
|  | Has the authority’s approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?                   |     |    |
|  | Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?   |     |    |
|  | Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2026</b> been reconciled to Box 8?  |     |    |
|  | Is an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 available, should a question be raised by a local elector and/or an interested party? |     |    |
| Sections 1 and 2   | Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? ( <i>Local Councils only</i> )      |     |    |

\* **Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

## Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2025/26 Form 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2026 and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2026 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2026** notifying the external auditor.

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

certifies that during the financial year 2025/26, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year **or** total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Total annual gross income for the authority 2025/26:

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2025/26:

ENTER AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt**, so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority **is unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£210 +VAT** will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2022
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2024/25), the external auditor **has not**:
  - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
  - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
  - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
  - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
  - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If the above statements apply and the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage\* before 1 July 2026.

**Signing this certificate confirms the authority will comply with the publication requirements.**

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by Chair

Date

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Generic email address of Authority

ENTER AUTHORITY OWNED GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS

Telephone number

TELEPHONE NUMBER

\*Published web address

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

**ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2026. Reminder letters for late submission will incur a charge of £40 + VAT.**

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

| Internal control objective   | Yes | No* | Not covered**  |
|--|-----|-----|----------------|
| A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.   |     |     |                |
| B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.  |     |     |                |
| C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.  |     |     |                |
| D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.   |     |     |                |
| E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.  |     |     |                |
| F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.   |     |     |                |
| G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.  |     |     |                |
| H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.   |     |     |                |
| I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.  |     |     |                |
| J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.   |     |     |                |
| K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>   |     |     |                |
| L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.   |     |     |                |
| M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> . |     |     |                |
| N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .   |     |     |                |
| O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.   |     |     |                |
| P. <b>(For local councils only)</b><br>Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.   | Yes | No  | Not applicable |

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed). Date(s) internal audit undertaken Name of person who carried out the internal audit

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

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

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

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

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

|  | Agreed |     | 'Yes' means that this authority:   |
|--|--------|-----|--|
|  | Yes    | No* |  |
| 1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.   |        |     | <i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>   |
| 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.   |        |     | <i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>   |
| 3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. |        |     | <i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>   |
| 4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.  |        |     | <i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>   |
| 5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.   |        |     | <i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>  |
| 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.   |        |     | <i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i> |
| 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.   |        |     | <i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>   |
| 8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.           |        |     | <i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>   |
| 9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.  | Yes    | No  | N/A<br><i>has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>  |
| 10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.   |        |     | <i>has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.</i>   |

\*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation **must** be published

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

### Information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)

Yes No

The authority website is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

|   | Year ending        |                    | Notes and guidance   |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--|
|   | 31 March 2025<br>£ | 31 March 2026<br>£ |  |
|   |                    |                    | <i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures <b>must</b> agree to underlying financial records.</i>                                      |
| 1. Balances brought forward                                 |                    |                    | <i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value <b>must</b> agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>   |
| 2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies                          |                    |                    | <i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>   |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts                                 |                    |                    | <i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>   |
| 4. (-) Staff costs  |                    |                    | <i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i> |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments                     |                    |                    | <i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>  |
| 6. (-) All other payments                                   |                    |                    | <i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>  |
| 7. (=) Balances carried forward                             |                    |                    | <i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. <b>must</b> equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>  |
| 8. Total value of cash and short term investments           |                    |                    | <i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b></i>  |
| 9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets |                    |                    | <i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>  |
| 10. Total borrowings  |                    |                    | <i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>  |

| For Local Councils Only   | Yes | No |  |
|---|-----|----|--|
| 11. Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions? |     |    | <i>For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.</i> |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

**Buckland and Chipping Parish Council**  
**Annual Return**

**Accounts for Year from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026**

This is prepared based on the information in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils : a Practitioners' Guide"

Important note: These figures have been prepared on a RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS basis.

\* Note :- An asterisk to the right of the box below indicates it is an item that has changed by more than 15% and £200 from the previous year and probably warrants a comment in your notes. This is only an indication and should not be considered exclusive. You will only see asterisks if this is the second year you have used the report .

| Box No. | Description                     | Year ending     |                 |   |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
|         |                                 | 31/03/2025<br>£ | 31/03/2026<br>£ |   |
| 1       | Balances brought fwd            | 15,886.56       | 14,624.03       |   |
| 2       | Annual precept                  | 10,450.00       | 11,495.00       |   |
| 3       | Total other receipts            | 11,445.25       | 2,654.91        | * |
| 4       | Staff Costs                     | 2,113.50        | 2,777.34        | * |
| 5       | Loan interest/capital repayment | 0.00            | 0.00            |   |
| 6       | Total other payments            | 21,044.28       | 8,341.31        | * |
| 7       | Balances carried forward        | 14,624.03       | 17,655.29       | * |
| 8       | Total Cash and Short Term Inve  | 14,624.03       | 17,655.29       | * |
| 9       | Total Fixed Assets and Long Ter | 39,207.52       | 39,277.52       |   |
| 10      | Total Borrowings                | 0.00            | 0.00            |   |

**Buckland and Chipping Parish Council**  
**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

|                              | RECEIPTS  | PAYMENTS |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Opening Balance              |           |          |
| Balance at Bank              | 14,624.03 |          |
| Cash in Hand                 |           |          |
| Salary                       |           | 2,745.74 |
| PAYE                         |           | 31.60    |
| Clerk Expenses               |           |          |
| Office & Admin               |           | 47.00    |
| Payroll Service              |           | 68.88    |
| Audit Costs                  |           | 251.88   |
| Website hosting              |           | 186.00   |
| Insurance                    |           | 556.52   |
| Hall Hire                    |           | 60.00    |
| Election Reserve             |           |          |
| Training                     |           | 37.50    |
| Newsletter                   |           | 348.00   |
| Bank Charges                 |           | 7.00     |
| Other                        |           |          |
| HAPTC                        |           | 158.13   |
| ICO                          |           |          |
| SLCC                         |           |          |
| CPRE                         |           |          |
| Grass Cutting                |           | 1,770.00 |
| Dog Litter Bins              |           | 659.55   |
| Trees & Reserve              |           |          |
| Bus Shelter                  |           |          |
| Poppy Wreath                 |           |          |
| Kiosks & Electric            |           |          |
| AED                          |           |          |
| Misc & Reserve               |           |          |
| Summer Event                 |           |          |
| Winter Event                 |           | 338.28   |
| Buckland Litter Pick         |           | 1,140.00 |
| Chipping Litter Pick         |           | 1,140.00 |
| Precept                      | 11,495.00 |          |
| Bank Charges                 |           | 66.00    |
| Spring National Clelbrations |           | 271.43   |
| CAB Donation                 |           | 50.00    |
| Event Income                 |           |          |
| Election costs               |           |          |
| VAT reclaim                  |           |          |
| Donation Received            | 100.00    |          |
| Donation                     |           |          |

**Buckland and Chipping Parish Council**  
**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

|                          | RECEIPTS         | PAYMENTS         |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grant received           | 250.00           |                  |
| PC Assets                |                  |                  |
| Property Repairs         |                  | 290.00           |
| AED unit                 |                  | 486.00           |
| VAT                      | 2,304.91         | 409.14           |
|                          | <b>14,149.91</b> | <b>11,118.65</b> |
| <b>Closing Balances:</b> |                  |                  |
| Balances in Bank Account |                  | 17,655.29        |
| Cash in Hand             |                  |                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>28,773.94</b> | <b>28,773.94</b> |

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2026

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible Financial Officer

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Buckland & Chipping Parish Council***

### **Code of Conduct**

reviewed May 2026

*Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

#### **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 behaviours 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, intimidatory 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/it's 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 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 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 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, close associate; or
- c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable 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 **affects** your 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 a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

**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.

| <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Description</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b> | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.<br>[Any unpaid directorship.]   |
| <b>Sponsorship</b>                                       | 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.<br>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.  |
| <b>Contracts</b>   | 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 —<br><br>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and<br>(b) which has not been fully discharged. |
| <b>Land and Property</b>                                 | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.<br>'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.  |
| <b>Licenses</b>            | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer  |
| <b>Corporate tenancies</b> | Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—<br>(a) the landlord is the council; and<br>(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.   |
| <b>Securities</b>          | Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—<br>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and<br>(b) either—<br>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or<br>(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 has 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 have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
  
- b) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) any body 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)

## Appendix C

Reference to 'dispensation' in the code means under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

If you would like the authority to consider granting you a dispensation where you have a DPI or other Interest, you must make a prior written request to the Clerk. The grounds under which such an application will be considered are detailed below:

### Dispensation grounds<sup>1</sup>

A dispensation may be granted only if, after having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the Clerk considers that—

- a) without the dispensation the number of Councillors prohibited from participating in any particular business, would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business, as to impede the transaction of the business;
- b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business;
- c) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area;
- d) without the dispensation each member of the authority's executive would be prohibited from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority's executive, or
- e) considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation

A dispensation must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed four years.

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<sup>1</sup> The full wording for the statutory grounds for a DPI dispensation can be found under section 33 Localism Act 2011



## ***Buckland & Chipping Parish Council***

### **Complaints Procedure**

**adopted May 2024**

***Reviewed 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025***

### **Buckland and Chipping Parish Council Complaints Procedure**

***To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026***

- 1) If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt. The complaint shall include the following:
  - Name of the complainant
  - Address of the complainant
  - Telephone number, fax number and/or email address
  - Details of the complaint
- 2) If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.
- 3)
  - a) On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or a Councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.
  - b) Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.
- 4) The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
- 5) The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.
- 6) The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
- 7) As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- 8) A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary from Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.



# ***Buckland & Chipping Parish Council***

## **Data Protection Policy**

**reviewed May 2024**

***To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026***

### **1. Introduction**

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council needs to collect and use certain types of information about the Individuals or Service Users who come into contact with Buckland & Chipping Parish Council in order to carry on our work. This personal information must be collected and dealt with appropriately whether is collected on paper, stored in a computer database, or recorded on other material and there are safeguards to ensure this under the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **2. Data Controller**

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council is the Data Controller under the Act, which means that it determines what purposes personal information held, will be used for. It is also responsible for notifying the Information Commissioner of the data it holds or is likely to hold, and the general purposes that this data will be used for.

### **3. Disclosure**

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council may share data with other agencies such as the local authority, funding bodies and other voluntary agencies.

The Individual/Service User will be made aware in most circumstances how and with whom their information will be shared. There are circumstances where the law allows Buckland & Chipping Parish Council to disclose data (including sensitive data) without the data subject's consent.

These are:

- a) Carrying out a legal duty or as authorised by the Secretary of State
- b) Protecting vital interests of a Individual/Service User or other person
- c) The Individual/Service User has already made the information public
- d) Conducting any legal proceedings, obtaining legal advice or defending any legal rights
- e) Monitoring for equal opportunities purposes – i.e. race, disability or religion
- f) Providing a confidential service where the Individual/Service User's consent cannot be obtained or where it is reasonable to proceed without consent: e.g. where we would wish to avoid forcing stressed or ill Individuals/Service Users to provide consent signatures.

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to successful working, and to maintaining the confidence of those with whom we deal.

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council intends to ensure that personal information is treated lawfully and correctly. To this end, Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will adhere to the Principles of Data Protection, as detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Specifically, the Principles require that personal information:

- a) Shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met,
- b) Shall be obtained only for one or more of the purposes specified in the Act, and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes,
- c) Shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to those purpose(s)
- d) Shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date,
- e) Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary
- f) Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act,
- g) Shall be kept secure by the Data Controller who takes appropriate technical and other measures to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing or accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal information,
- h) Shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of Individuals/Service Users in relation to the processing of personal information.

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will, through appropriate management and strict application of criteria and controls:

- Observe fully conditions regarding the fair collection and use of information
- Meet its legal obligations to specify the purposes for which information is used
- Collect and process appropriate information, and only to the extent that it is needed to fulfill its operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements
- Ensure the quality of information used
- Ensure that the rights of people about whom information is held, can be fully exercised under the Act. These include:
  - The right to be informed that processing is being undertaken,
  - The right of access to one's personal information
  - The right to prevent processing in certain circumstances and
  - The right to correct, rectify, block or erase information which is regarded as wrong information
- Take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information
- Ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards
- Treat people justly and fairly whatever their age, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity when dealing with requests for information
- Set out clear procedures for responding to requests for information

#### **4. Data collection**

Informed consent is when

- An Individual/Service User clearly understands why their information is needed, who it will be shared with, the possible consequences of them agreeing or refusing the proposed use of the data
- And then gives their consent.

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will ensure that data is collected within the boundaries defined in this policy. This applies to data that is collected in person, or by completing a form.

When collecting data, Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will ensure that the Individual/Service User:

- a) Clearly understands why the information is needed
- b) Understands what it will be used for and what the consequences are should the Individual/Service User decide not to give consent to processing
- c) As far as reasonably possible, grants explicit consent, either written or verbal for data to be processed
- d) Is, as far as reasonably practicable, competent enough to give consent and has given so freely without any duress
- e) Has received sufficient information on why their data is needed and how it will be used

#### **5. Data Storage**

Information and records relating to service users will be stored securely and will only be accessible to authorised staff and volunteers.

Information will be stored for only as long as it is needed or required statute and will be disposed of appropriately.

It is Buckland & Chipping Parish Council's responsibility to ensure all personal and company data is non-recoverable from any computer system previously used within the organisation, which has been passed on/sold to a third party.

#### **6. Data access and accuracy**

All Individuals/Service Users have the right to access the information Buckland & Chipping Parish Council holds about them. Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will also take reasonable steps ensure that this information is kept up to date by asking data subjects whether there have been any changes. In addition, Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will ensure that:

- It has a Data Protection Officer with specific responsibility for ensuring compliance with Data Protection
- Everyone processing personal information understands that they are contractually responsible for following good data protection practice
- Everyone processing personal information is appropriately trained to do so
- Everyone processing personal information is appropriately supervised

- Anybody wanting to make enquiries about handling personal information knows what to do
- It deals promptly and courteously with any enquiries about handling personal information
- It describes clearly how it handles personal information
- It will regularly review and audit the ways it hold, manage and use personal information
- It regularly assesses and evaluates its methods and performance in relation to handling personal information
- All staff are aware that a breach of the rules and procedures identified in this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them.

This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice in data management, security and control and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments made to the Data Protection Act 1998.

In case of any queries or questions in relation to this policy please contact the Buckland & Chipping Parish Council Data Protection Officer:

Signed:

Sarah Kubica, Data Protection Officer

Position: Proper Officer and Clerk to Buckland & Chipping Parish Council

Date: 11 May 2026

Review Date: May 2027

## Glossary of Terms

**Data Controller** – The person who (either alone or with others) decides what personal information Buckland & Chipping Parish Council will hold and how it will be held or used.

**Data Protection Act 1998** – The UK legislation that provides a framework for responsible behaviour by those using personal information.

**Data Protection Officer** – The person(s) responsible for ensuring that Buckland & Chipping Parish Council follows its data protection policy and complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Individual/Service User** – The person whose personal information is being held or processed by Buckland & Chipping Parish Council for example: a councillor, an employee, or parishioner.

**Explicit consent** – is a freely given, specific and informed agreement by an Individual/Service User in the processing of personal information about her/him. Explicit consent is needed for processing sensitive data.

**Notification** – Notifying the Information Commissioner about the data processing activities of Buckland & Chipping Parish Council, as certain activities may be exempt from notification.

The link below will take to the ICO website where a self assessment guide will help you to decide if you are exempt from notification:

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/for\\_organisations/data\\_protection/the\\_guide/exemptions.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/the_guide/exemptions.aspx)

**Information Commissioner** – The UK Information Commissioner responsible for implementing and overseeing the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Processing** – means collecting, amending, handling, storing or disclosing personal information.

**Personal Information** – Information about living individuals that enables them to be identified – e.g. name and address. It does not apply to information about organisations, companies and agencies but applies to named persons, such as individual volunteers or employees within Buckland & Chipping Parish Council.

**Sensitive data** – refers to data about:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political affiliations
- Religion or similar beliefs
- Trade union membership
- Physical or mental health
- Sexuality
- Criminal record or proceedings

The **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)** – provides independent advice and guidance about data protection and freedom of information.

Regular updates can be found on their website [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)



# *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

## **Disciplinary Procedure**

reviewed December 2024  
*To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

- i. Unsatisfactory time keeping.
- ii. Absenteeism, including any absence from work during a working day without prior authorisation or instruction.
- iii. Failure to comply with rules and regulations applicable to job requirements.
- iv. Failure by an employee to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her post to the standard expected by the Council.
- v. Insubordination.
- vi. Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Council as amounting to misconduct.

1.2 For first instances of minor misconduct the Clerk/Chairman may speak to the employee informally before implementing a formal disciplinary procedure. However there is no obligation for the Clerk/Chairman to do this.

### **2. SCOPE**

The procedure applies to all employees of Buckland & Chipping Parish Council.

### **3. VERBAL WARNINGS**

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

on the employees personnel file and a copy will be provided to the employee. A Verbal Warning will normally remain in force for 6 months.

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

#### **4. FIRST WRITTEN WARNING**

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

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

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

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

#### **5. FINAL WRITTEN WARNING**

If further misconduct occurs within the time period specified in a First Written Warning, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious the employee will be given a Final Written Warning. A Final Written Warning will be issued by the Clerk/Chairman and will set out:

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

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

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

#### **6. STANDARD COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

- 6.1. In the case of further misconduct within the time period specified in any Final Written Warning or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious and the council deems it to be appropriate to contemplate the dismissal, demotion or suspension (without pay) of the employee the following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.
- 6.2. The Council will investigate the alleged misconduct and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses.
- 6.3. The Council will set out in writing the alleged conduct or other circumstances which lead the Council to contemplate dismissing the employee or taking disciplinary action against the employee and the basis for the allegation and will send the employee a copy of the statement inviting the employee to attend a disciplinary meeting to discuss the matter. The employee will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to consider his or her response to the information provided in the statement before attending the meeting. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- 6.4. Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within 5 working days of the council sending the employee the written statement referred to in 6.3 above. The employee may be accompanied to any disciplinary meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union. The Council will be represented by the Clerk/Chairman.
- 6.5. If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee or for the employees companion should he or she wish to be accompanied to the meeting pursuant to 6.4 above) the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.
- 6.6. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Clerk/Chairman time to consider their decision.
- 6.7. After the meeting the Council will inform the employee of their decision and any applicable sanction within 5 working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 6.8. If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision he or she must notify the Council in writing within 5 days of receiving written notice of the decision.
- 6.9. If the employee notifies the Council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Council. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.
- 6.10. A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the Council receiving notification that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 6.8 above. If the meeting date is inconvenient for the employee or the employee's companion he or she may ask to postpone the meeting by up to [5] working days.
  - i. Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
  - ii. The disciplinary appeal sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.

- iii. The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
  - iv. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Council time to consider its decision.
- 6.11. After the disciplinary appeal meeting the Council will inform the employee of its final decision within 5 working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

## **7. COUNCIL DISMISSAL PROCEDURE FOR USE IN GROSS MISCONDUCT**

- 7.1. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the council as Gross Misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:
- i. Refusal or repeated failure by an employee to carry out his or her duties.
  - ii. Falsification of documents or information (including expense claims).
  - iii. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.



## ***Buckland & Chipping Parish Council***

# **Financial Regulations**

***To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026***

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## 1. General

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

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

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £1000.

## **2. Risk management and internal control**

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

4.3. No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments 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 October each year.

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

- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget, the council shall determine its council tax (England) requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **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 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 Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 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 £2,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £2,000 excluding VAT the Clerk or RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;

- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £2,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split 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, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.
  - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £500 excluding VAT
  - in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
  - the council for all items over £2,000;
- 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 unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such

action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £500 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.
- 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, in accordance with a resolution of the council or a delegated decision by an officer, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the 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 copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.

- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the council for information only.
- 6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £500 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
  - ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
  - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the Clerk certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
  - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £500, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

## **7. Electronic payments**

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

- 7.6. Two[councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council 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 the Clerk and a member of the council. 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.
- 7.15.

## **8. Payment cards**

- 8.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk 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.
- 8.2. 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.

- 8.3. 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.
- 8.4. Personal credit or debit cards of councillors or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £500 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

## **9. Petty Cash**

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

## **10. Payment of salaries and allowances**

- 10.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 10.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 10.3. 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.
- 10.4. 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.
- 10.5. 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.
- 10.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the finance committee] to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 10.7. 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.
- 10.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

## **11. Loans and investments**

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. 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.

- 11.3. 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.
- 11.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 11.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 11.6. 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.

## **12. Income**

- 12.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 12.2. 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.
- 12.3. 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.
- 12.4. 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.
- 12.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 12.6. Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made at least annually at the end of the financial year.
- 12.7. 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. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works**

- 13.1. 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.
- 13.2. 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.

#### **14. Stores and equipment**

- 14.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 14.2. 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.
- 14.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 14.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

#### **15. Assets, properties and estates**

- 15.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 15.2. 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.
- 15.3. 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.
- 15.4. 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.

#### **16. Insurance**

- 16.1. 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.

- 16.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the council of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 16.3. 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.
- 16.4. 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.

## **17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 17.1. 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.
- 17.2. 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.
- 17.3. 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.



## **Freedom of Information Policy**

*To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The above act provides for the provision of certain records of Town and Parish Councils. The list below contains the statutory requirements of Buckland & Chipping Parish Council in providing information. The Clerk is normally willing, subject to the Data Protection Act, to provide other information wherever possible.

#### **1. Council Internal Practice and Procedure**

- Minutes of Council meetings – limited to the last 2 years
- Procedural Standing Orders
- Council's Annual Report
- Agendas and supporting papers for Council meetings – limited in each case to the next scheduled meeting
- Terms of Reference for Committees
- Internal Review (Complaints) Procedure (non statutory)

#### **2. Code of Conduct**

- Members' Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- Members' Register of Interests (now available for viewing on the Parish Council website under the Localism Act 2012)

#### **3. Periodic Electoral Review**

- Information relating to the last Periodic Electoral Review of the Council area
- Information relating to the latest boundary review of the Council area

#### **4. Employment Practice and Procedure**

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Job descriptions
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staffing structure

#### **5. Planning Documents**

- Responses to planning applications
- Buckland & Chipping Conservation Area
- Parish Plan

#### **6. Audit and Accounts**

- Annual return form – limited to last financial year
- Annual Statutory report by External Auditor – limited to last financial year
- Receipt/payment books, bank statements – limited to the last financial year
- Precept request – limited to last financial year
- VAT records – limited to last financial year
- Financial Standing Orders and Regulations
- Asset Register
- Risk Assessments
- Loan sanction approvals
- Fees and charges applied by the Council
- Register/file of members allowances



## *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

# **Grievance Procedure**

reviewed May 2024

*To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This procedure applies to all employees of Buckland & Chipping Parish Council (“the Council”).
- 1.2. The objectives of the procedure are: -
  - To foster good relationships between the Council and its employees by discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
  - To settle grievances as near as possible to their point of origin;
  - To ensure the Council treats grievances seriously and resolves them as quickly as possible; and
  - To ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently throughout the Council.
- 1.3. Matters **excluded** from this procedure are as follows: -
  - Appeals against salary or gradings;
  - Appeals against disciplinary actions;
  - Income tax, national insurance matters, rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level;
  - Rules of pension schemes; and
  - A grievance about a matter over which the Council has no control.

### **2. INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee is encouraged to first discuss any grievance with the Clerk/Chairman with a view to resolving the matter informally if appropriate. If the employee feels that this is not appropriate or he or she wishes to pursue a formal grievance they should follow the procedure detailed below.

### **3. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- 3.1. The employee must set out his/her grievance in writing (“Statement of Grievance”) and provide a copy to the Clerk/Chairman.
- 3.2. Once the Chairman has had a reasonable opportunity to consider its response to the information provided in the Statement of Grievance the employee will be invited to attend a grievance meeting with the Council to discuss the matter.

- (i) The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
  - (ii) Grievance meetings will normally be convened within 14 days of the Council receiving the Statement of Grievance.
  - (iii) The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
  - (iv) If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or his/her companion, the employee has the right to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.
- 3.3. A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the employee time to consider the decision.
- 3.4. After the meeting the employee will be informed of the Council's decision within 5 working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 3.5. If the employee wishes to appeal against the Council's decision, he/she must inform the council within 5 working days of receiving the decision.
- 3.6. If the employee notifies the Council that they wish to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting before the Council. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
- 3.7. A grievance appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the Council receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 3.5. above. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his/her companion, the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.
- 3.8. After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the Council's final decision within 5 working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

#### **4. MODIFIED COUNCIL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (FOR FORMER EMPLOYEES)**

- 4.1. If an ex-employee wishes to raise a grievance, he/she must set out their grievance and the basis for that grievance in writing and provide a copy to the Chairman of the Council.
- 4.2. Following receipt of a statement of grievance pursuant to 4.1. above, the Council will either write to the ex-employee inviting him or her to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance, or to ask for the ex-employee's agreement to the Council responding to the grievance in writing.
- 4.2.1. If the ex-employee does not agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence within 7 working days of the Council writing to them pursuant to 4.2. above steps 3.1. to 3.4. of the Council's Grievance Procedure will be followed. The meeting will be conducted by the Council.

- 4.2.2. If the ex-employee does agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence, the Council will consider his/her grievance and will respond to the ex-employee in writing within 14 days of the receipt of such confirmation setting out the basis for the Council's decision.

## **5. GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION**

- 5.1. Grievances raised under the Parish Council's Grievance Procedure will normally be investigated, and any meetings to discuss the grievance conducted by the Clerk/Chairman.
- 5.2. If an employee's grievance is about the Clerk they should raise the matter with the Council Chairman. All investigations and any grievance meeting will be conducted by the Chairman and any grievance appeal meeting will be conducted by 3 members of the Council.
- 5.3. A grievance raised by the Clerk to the Council will be conducted by the Council Chairman. Any grievance appeal meeting will be conducted by 3 members of the Council.
- 5.4. A copy of the Statement of Grievance, a note of the decision taken at the first stage of the procedure, any notice of appeal and appeal decision will be placed on the employee's/ex-employees personnel file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.
- 5.5. Where a grievance concerns the Chairman of the Council, matters will be conducted by the Vice-Chairman of the Council.



# **Buckland & Chipping Parish Council**

## **General Reserves Policy**

**adopted 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

***To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026***

### **1. Introduction**

Buckland and Chipping Parish Council is required to maintain adequate Financial Reserves to meet the needs of its operations and to ensure financial security. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide (JPAG) (March 2021 edition) advises:

*“As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities 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.”*

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. However, there is no specific minimum level of reserves which an authority should hold, and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer to advise the Parish Council about the level of reserves and to ensure that there are procedures for their establishment and use.

### **2. Types of Reserves**

These may be categorised as either General or Specific.

#### **2.1. General Reserves**

General Reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions on their use. They cushion the impact of uneven cash flows, offset budget requirements, if necessary, or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies. Setting the level of General Reserves is agreed with the Annual Budget.

JPAG (March 2021 edition) advises:

*“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).”*

*“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.”*

The primary means of building General Reserves will be through allocation from the annual budget or underspend on projects. This will be in addition to any amounts needed to replenish reserves which have been spent in the previous year. If in extreme circumstances General Reserves were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, the Parish Council would be able to draw down from its Ear Marked Reserves to provide short term resources.

## **2.2. Earmarked Reserves ‘EMR’s**

EMRs must be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level should be subject to annual review and justification. They should be separately identified to prevent query from internal and external auditors.

EMRs are held for several reasons and shall only be used for the purpose for which they were created:

- Renewals – to enable the planning and financing of an effective program of equipment replacement and property maintenance/refurbishment. The funds required are built up incrementally over several years when taking into account asset conditions and asset life. They are a mechanism to smooth expenditure without the need to vary budgets.
- Carry forward of underspend on an uncompleted project – expenditure committed to a project but not spent in the budget year. Reserves can be used as a mechanism to carry forward those resources.
- Developers Contributions – proceeds from developers which can only be used for specified purposes.
- Other Earmarked Reserves – these may be set up from time to time to meet known or predicted liabilities.

Where the purpose of an Earmarked Reserve becomes obsolete, or where there is an over-provision of funds, the excess may, on the approval of the Parish Council, be transferred to other budget headings within the revenue budget, to General Reserves or to one or more other Earmarked Reserves.

EMRs will be established on a “needs” basis in line with anticipated requirements and these are to be reviewed annually when the budget is agreed.

Any decision to set up an EMR must be approved by Parish Council. If the EMRs are used to meet short term funding gaps, they must be replenished in the following financial year. However, EMRs which have been used to meet a specific liability would not need to be replenished, after having served the purpose for which they were originally set up.

### **3. Management and Control of Reserves**

Movements in Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves shall be reported to the Parish Council as part of the quarterly Budget to Actual Report and at monthly meetings if required. The use of Reserves shall be approved by the Parish Council.

The level of General Reserves shall be reviewed on an annual basis during the annual budgetary review and agreed by the Parish Council. The minimum level of General Reserves shall be recommended to the Parish Council by the Responsible Financial Officer. This will form part of the recommendations for the Annual Budget and Precept request by the Parish Council.

The current level of General Reserves to be held by the Council is set at equal to between nine and twelve months of predicted expenditure.

Earmarked Reserves shall be reviewed on an individual basis. This review will also be undertaken as part of the Annual Budgetary Review. Approval for the creation, amendment, cessation or continuation of Earmarked Reserves will be given by the Parish Council.



## *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

# Retention of Documents and Records Policy

reviewed May 2025

*To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

This policy details the minimum retention time required for council documents before disposal in order for the council to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme. Where variable times are indicated the Council will review storage after the minimum period has elapsed.

| <b>Document</b>                                | <b>Minimum Period</b>       | <b>Reason</b>               |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>MINUTES</b>                                 |                             |                             |
| Approved minutes                               | Indefinite                  | Archive                     |
| Draft/rough/notes of minutes taken at meetings | Until minutes are approved  | Management                  |
| <b>FINANCE</b>                                 |                             |                             |
| Receipt and Payment Accounts                   | Indefinite                  | Archive                     |
| Paid invoices                                  | 6 years                     | VAT                         |
| VAT records                                    | 6 years                     | VAT                         |
| Bank Statements                                | Last completed audit year   | Audit                       |
| Paying in books                                | Last completed audit year   | Audit                       |
| Cheque stubs                                   | Last completed audit year   | Audit                       |
| Scales of fees and charges                     | 5 years                     | Management                  |
| Members allowances register                    | 6 years                     | Tax, Statute of Limitations |
| <b>PLANNING</b>                                |                             |                             |
| Permissions                                    | 6 years                     | Compliance                  |
| Permissions - on appeal                        | Indefinite                  | Precedent                   |
| Permissions - commercial or development        | Indefinite                  | Future compliance           |
| Refusals                                       | 2 years                     | Appeals                     |
| <b>INSURANCE</b>                               |                             |                             |
| Insurance policies                             | 2 years                     | Management                  |
| Certificates of Employers' Liability Insurance | 40 years                    | Limitation period           |
| <b>OTHER</b>                                   |                             |                             |
| Quotations and tenders                         | 12 years /indefinite        | Statute of Limitations      |
| Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts     | Indefinite                  | Audit, Management           |
| Routine correspondence, papers & emails        |                             | Retain as long as useful    |
| Notes from meetings                            | Until minutes are confirmed | Minutes are signed          |



## *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

### **Scheme of Delegation**

**adopted 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

***To be Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026***

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## **1. DISCHARGE OF THE SCHEME**

- 1.1 This Scheme of Delegation forms part of the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and will be reviewed every two years and when there are staffing changes.
- 1.2 Those with delegated responsibility are referred to by job title, Parish Clerk.
- 1.3 One of the purposes of the document is to clearly define the parameters within which Officers of the Council are able to act without reference to Councillors. Where consultation with others is a requirement of the ability to act it is clearly set out with whom that consultation should take place.
- 1.4 Any deviation from this scheme should be reported to Council at the earliest opportunity with an explanation of the circumstances in which the breach occurred.
- 1.5 The other purpose of the document is to capture the various delegated powers throughout the Council, including those delegated by the Council to its committees. This element of the scheme incorporates the Terms of Reference of the committees.

## **2. PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION**

- 2.1 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides:
  - That a Council may delegate its powers (except those incapable of delegation) to a committee; or an officer.
  - A Committee may delegate its powers to an officer.
  - The delegating body may exercise Powers that have been delegated.
- 2.2 Any delegation to a Committee or the Proper Officer shall be exercised in compliance with the Council's Standing Orders, any other policies or conditions imposed by the Council and with the law.
- 2.3 In an emergency the Proper Officer is empowered to carry out any function of the Council.
- 2.4 Where the Parish Clerk is contemplating any action under delegated powers, which is likely to have a significant impact in a particular area, they should also consult the Chairman of the Council and must ensure that they obtain appropriate legal, financial and other specialist advice before action is taken.

## **3. Authority to Act**

- 3.1.1 It will be appropriate for the Parish Clerk to refer a matter to the Council where the determination of the matter is likely to be particularly controversial or raises issues of policy which it would be appropriate for councillors to determine; or could, by its scale or complexity expose the Council to major corporate risk.
- 3.2 The Parish Clerk and Committees have the responsibility to act within the Councils approved policies, procedures and framework and within the law in conjunction with this delegated scheme.

## **4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- 4.1 Under the Local Government Act 1972, section 117 the Parish Clerk must make a formal declaration about council contracts where they have a financial interest.
- 4.2 Where the Parish Clerk has a conflict of interest in any matter, he/she shall not participate in that matter unless approved by the Council and this is formally recorded in the Council minutes.

## **5 COUNCIL RESERVED POWERS**

- 5.1 The following matters are only to be resolved by the full Council:
- Appointment of the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and other council officers following a recommendation from the HR Committee
  - To adopt and change the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and other Council policies
  - To approve and adopt the Policy Framework.
  - To approve and adopt the Budget.
  - To agree and/or amend the terms of reference for Committees
  - To adopt the schedule of meetings for the ensuing year.
  - To determine matters involving expenditure for which budget provision is not made or is exceeded.
  - To set the Precept.
  - To make byelaws.
  - To borrow money.
  - To annually approve the statutory annual return
  - To approve eligibility for the General Power of Competence

## **6 DELEGATION TO COMMITTEES - SAFEGUARDS**

- 6.1 The Council may, at any time without prejudice to executive action taken already, revoke any executive power delegated to a Committee or Officer.

## **7 DELEGATION TO COMMITTEES**

### **Human Resources Committee (HR)**

The Parish Council will elect the Chairman and HR Committee members at the first meeting of every Municipal year (May). Councillors will be re-elected to the committee every year.

Where appropriate the committee will provide recommendations to the council and abide by their final decision

**Membership:** Three Parish Councillors

**Quorum:** Three Parish Councillors

**Meetings:** As required when required to ensure that Buckland and Chipping Parish Council complies with the requirements of employment law and follows best practice in providing good working conditions for staff

### **Terms of Reference:**

The HR Committee will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Recruitment of Parish Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer and other staff as required
- 2) Recruitment and selection procedures
- 3) Annual staff appraisal and development
- 4) Review of staff contracts, grievance and discipline policies every two years
- 5) Review of staff and accommodation requirements
- 6) Management of rights relating to leave, time off and illness
- 7) To ensure that the Clerk has everything required for managing other staff
- 8) To ensure the health and safety of all staff and carry out risk assessments
- 9) To keep up to date with developments in employment law
- 10) The HR Committee will serve as the disciplinary or grievance panel
- 11) To agree the members to sit on an appeals panel to hear appeals against a decision on a grievance

## **8 DELEGATION TO PARISH CLERK**

### **(a) Parish Clerk**

1. The Parish Clerk is designated and authorised to act as the Proper Officer for the purposes of all relevant sections of the Local Government Act 1972 and any other statute requiring the designation of a proper officer.
2. In the case of an emergency, the Clerk shall have the power to take reasonable steps to secure the Council's assets or position, following consultation with the Chairman (if practicable in the circumstances).
3. The Clerk will have the authority to dispose of the Council's assets (excluding land and building assets) subject to the estimated value of any one tangible; moveable item does not exceed £500. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring any disposal details including the disposal values are recorded in the assets register.
4. Power to authorise relevant training courses provided the expense can be met from approved budgets having taken into account the training needs of the employees.
5. The Clerk is the manager for all staff employed by the Council and is given delegated powers to manage the council staff in accordance with the Council's policies, procedures and budget
6. The authority to sanction and authorise payment of overtime so long as the costs can be contained within the parameters of the approved budget. The Clerk shall have the authority to engage casual workers subject to budget and the Clerk shall consult with the HR Committee members when such work is to be sanctioned.
7. Power to act immediately on all Health and Safety or emergency issues without waiting for endorsement by the full Council
8. As Proper Officer, to sign all documents on behalf of the Council including the Summons to Elected Members to attend Council Meetings in accordance with paragraph 4 and Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972

9. To sign and publish the annual public notice that the Audit of Accounts is to take place and has taken place.
10. To receive members' acceptance of declarations of interest and their appointment as a Councillor.
11. Power to release press statements on any activities of the Council subject to prior consultation with the Chairman
12. Power to act on own initiative to implement the Councils policies and objectives.
13. Power to take appropriate steps to ensure the Council does not exceed its powers.
14. Power to manage all the Council's facilities and resources in accordance with the Council's policies.
15. In liaison and after conferring with the Chairman, to make such Civic arrangements as are necessary.
16. The Proper Officer shall have authority to issue written authorisation to individual officers to act as the Council's authorised officers in the performance of their statutory or other duties.
17. The Proper Officer shall be responsible for signing all the Council's Official Notices as set out in the Standing Orders
18. As Proper Officer/Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk may incur expenditure on revenue items on behalf of the Council up to the amounts included in the approved budget.
19. The Parish Clerk, in consultation with Councillors, to make comment on planning applications submitted to Buckland and Chipping Parish Council by East Herts District Council within the statutory 21 day consultation period if the deadline is before the next Council meeting.

**(b) Responsible Financial Officer**

1. The Responsible Financial Officer will be responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances and accounting procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time and with the policies and procedures set by the Council and within the law
2. The Responsible Financial Officer will have the power to release any financial related report or document to the Council in discharge of the Responsible Financial Officer responsibilities
3. The Responsible Financial Officer shall ensure the approved precept request is issued to the billing authority



## *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

### **Standing Orders**

reviewed May 2024

*Reviewed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026*

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## 1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
  - iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed ( 5 ) minutes without the consent of the chairman 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 chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## 3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

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

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice OR [The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting].**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed (15) minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

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

- **rights present and voting.**
- r **The Chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted**
  - and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting
  - shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours unless agreed by a resolution of the Council.

#### 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 (6) clear days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
  - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
  - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
  - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;

- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

## **5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- 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 Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of**

**votes.**

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

legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

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

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

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within (7) days of having been requested to do so by (2) members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any (2) members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

## **7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

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

## **8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS**

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of

votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

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

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

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

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

### 13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

*See also standing order 3(u).*

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

- ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
- iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

#### **14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

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

#### **15. PROPER OFFICER**

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
  - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
    - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences 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 ( 5 ) days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute 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 Chairman and 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. 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.
- d. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
  - e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, 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 the staffing committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of the Council or, if he is not available, the vice-chairman of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to Council at its next meeting.
- c. The chairman of Council or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of any member of staff. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by Council.
- d. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff shall contact the chairman of Council or in his absence, the vice-chairman of Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- e. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by any member of staff relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Council, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council, which shall be reported back and progressed

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

OR

*[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeds £200,000]* **The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

## **21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

(Below is not an exclusive list).

*See also standing order 11.*

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**

- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

## **22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

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

## **23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

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

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **[Subject to standing order 23(a), the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.]**

*The above is applicable to a Council with a common seal.*

OR

**[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.]**

*The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.*

## **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 ( 3 ) councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Reviewed: May 2025

Next review due: May 2026 or as required



**Information Technology Policy**

To be adopted May 2026

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## **Introduction**

Each council will have its own IT setup and, as such, a single 'one-size-fits-all' IT policy is unlikely to be appropriate. Some smaller parish councils may operate with minimal equipment, while others may manage multiple devices connected to a central server. These guidelines are intended to help councils identify key considerations when developing or updating their own IT policy.

Councils that use external IT providers should ensure their policies accurately reflect current practices and contractual arrangements.

## **Purpose of the IT Policy**

The purpose of an IT policy is to establish clear parameters for how councillors, staff, and other authorised users use council-provided technology or equipment in the course of their duties. A well-defined policy helps to:

Set expectations for appropriate use of equipment and systems;

Raise awareness of risks associated with IT use;

Safeguard the council's data and digital assets;

Clarify what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable use;

Outline the consequences of policy breaches.

Councils will also need to determine and clearly state whether limited personal use of IT equipment is permitted (for example, checking personal email or online shopping during lunch breaks).

## **Monitoring of IT Use**

As an IT provider, the council has the right to monitor the use of its IT equipment and systems, provided there is a legitimate reason for doing so and councillors, employees and other authorised users are informed that such monitoring may take place. Any monitoring must be proportionate and comply with relevant data protection and privacy laws. Other persons may be included if they access or use council systems e.g. if they have a council e-mail address

## **Scope of this policy**

This policy applies to all councillors, staff, and other authorised users, regardless of their working location or pattern, including those who are home-based, office-based or work on a flexible or part-time basis. It sets out the expectations for the appropriate use of IT equipment and systems provided by the council.

### **1. Computer use**

1.1 If council computer equipment is provided for council purposes, reasonable personal use is permitted ('reasonable' interpreted as in the opinion of the council) and should not interrupt daily council work in any way. Councillors, staff and other authorised users are asked to restrict any personal use to official break times and outside working hours.

1.2 All councillors, staff and other authorised users must lock their computers when unattended to prevent unauthorised access. This applies to all council and personal devices used for work. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

- 1.3 Any damage sustained to council-owned equipment will have a financial impact on the council and equipment should be treated with care.
- 1.4 Council-owned computer and electronic hardware should be kept clean and every precaution taken to prevent food and drink being dropped or spilled onto it.
- 1.5 Equipment should not be dismantled or reassembled without seeking advice.
- 1.6 Councillors, staff and other authorised users are not to purchase any computer or mobile equipment (including software) for the council, unless previously authorised.
- 1.7 Personal discs, USB drives or devices, CDs, DVDs, data storage devices etc cannot be used on council computers without the prior approval of the council.

## **2. Equipment**

### **2.1 Portable equipment**

- 2.1.1 Portable equipment includes laptop computers, netbooks, tablets, mobile and smart phones with email capability and access to the internet etc.
- 2.1.2 It is particularly emphasised that council back-up procedures specific to portable equipment should be followed at all times.
- 2.1.3 All portable computers must be stored safely and securely when not in use. Portable equipment should be kept with or near the user when away from the premises and should never be left in parked vehicles.
- 2.1.4 It is important to ensure that all portable devices are protected with encryption in case they are lost or stolen. All smartphones or tablets that hold council data, including emails and files, must be protected with a pin code. Where possible, these devices should also be programmed to erase all content after several unsuccessful attempts to break in. Any security set on these devices must not be disabled or removed.
- 2.1.5 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is a security process that requires users to verify their identity using two or more independent methods—for example, entering a password (something you know) and confirming a code sent to your mobile device (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and sensitive data. NALC recommends implementing MFA as a best practice to enhance information security and support compliance with data protection obligations under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 2.1.6 If an item of portable equipment is lost or damaged this should be reported to the clerk. If the loss or damage is due to an act of negligence, the individual responsible may be liable to meet the cost of the loss/damage
- 2.1.7 To protect confidential information, unless it is a requirement of the job and this has been authorised, it is forbidden for photographs or videos to be taken on council premises without the prior written permission of the council. This includes mobile telephones with camera function, camcorder, tape or other recording device for sound or pictures - moving or still.

2.1.8 Under no circumstances should any non public meeting or conversation be recorded without the permission of those present. This does not affect statutory rights under The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014.

2.1.9 In addition, the council does not permit webcams (which may be pre-installed on many laptops) to be used in the workplace, other than for conference calls for council purposes. If there is any doubt as to whether a device falls under this clause, advice should be sought from the clerk.

## 2.2 Use of own devices

2.2.1 The Council recognises that some councillors, staff, and other authorised users may wish to use their own smartphones, tablets, laptops etc to access servers, private clouds or networks for normal council purposes, including, but not limited to, reading email, accessing documents stored on the council's shared drive or to store data on the council's shared drive or access data in other services. Any such use of personal devices will be at the discretion of the council, but consent for standard systems (MS Windows, Mac OS X, Linux - in commercial configurations) will normally be permitted. Such devices should be kept up to date so that any vulnerabilities in the operating system or other software on the device are appropriately patched or updated.

2.2.2 However, the same security precautions apply to personal devices as to the council's desktop equipment. If calls are made from personal phones to external parties, ensure that personal numbers and data are not shared by councillors and staff. Any emails sent from own devices should be sent from a council email account and should not identify the individual's personal email address.

2.2.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised persons that use council systems are expected to use all devices in an ethical and respectful manner and in accordance with this policy. Accessing inappropriate websites or services on any device via the IT infrastructure that is paid for or provided by the council carries a high degree of risk and for employees, may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal (without notice). For workers or contractors, we may terminate the worker agreement. This is irrespective of the ownership of the device used. An example would be downloading copyright music illegally or accessing pornographic material.

2.2.4 In cases of legal proceedings against the council, the council may need to temporarily take possession of a device, whether council-owned or personal, to retrieve the relevant data.

2.2.5 Wherever possible the user should maintain a clear separation between the personal data processed on the council's behalf and that processed for their own personal use, for example, by using different apps for council and personal use. If the device supports both work and personal profiles, the work profile must always be used for work-related purposes.

2.2.6 Councillors, staff and other authorised users who intend to use their own devices via the council's infrastructure must ensure that they:

- use a 6-digit pin, strong password or finger print (preferably the latter) to protect their device(s) from being accessed. For smartphones and tablets this should lock the device after 4 failed login attempts;

- configure their device(s) to automatically prompt for a password after a period of inactivity of more than 10 minutes;
- always password protect any documents containing confidential information that are sent as attachments to an email and notify the password separately (preferably by a means other than email);
- for smartphones and tablets, activate the automatic device wipe function (where available). Note that use of the remote wipe function may also involve the removal of the individual's personal data. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are therefore advised to keep personal data separate from council data where possible;
- ensure secure WiFi networks are used;
- ensure that work-related data cannot be viewed or retrieved by family or friends who may use the device;
- inform the clerk if their device(s) is/are lost, stolen or inappropriately accessed where there is risk of access to council data or resources. To prevent phones being used, they will need to retain the details of their IMEI number and the SIM number of the device as their provider will require this to deactivate it.

2.2.7 Any work done on user's own equipment should be stored securely and password protected and should always be backed up in accordance with the council's standard backup procedures.

2.2.8 Prior to the disposal of any device that has work data stored on it, and in the event of a user leaving the council, councillors, staff, and other authorised users are required to allow the clerk access to the device to ensure that all passwords, user access shortcuts and any identifiable data are removed from the device.

2.2.9 Councillors, staff and other authorised users must take responsibility for understanding how their device(s) work in respect to the above rules if they are accessing council servers/services via their own IT equipment. Risks to the user's personal device(s) include data loss as a result of a crash of the operating system, bugs and viruses, software or hardware failures and programming errors rendering a device inoperable. The council will use reasonable endeavours to assist, but councillors, staff and other authorised users are personally liable for their own device(s) and for any costs incurred as a result of the above.

### **3. Health and safety**

3.1 The council has a duty to ensure that regular appropriate eye tests, carried out by a competent person, are offered to employees using display screen equipment. This should be claimed back as an employee expense.

3.2 Any VDU user who feels that their workstation requires changes to make it compliant must speak to the staffing committee.

3.3 If any hazards are detected at a workstation, including 'noises' from council-owned IT equipment, this should be reported immediately to the clerk.

## **4 Password and Authentication Policy**

### **4.1 Passwords**

4.1.1 All user accounts must be protected by strong, secure passwords. The council follows the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) recommendations for creating passwords using three random words (e.g. PurpleCandleRiver). This method helps

create passwords that are both strong and easy to remember, while offering effective protection against common cyber threats such as brute-force attacks. This approach is endorsed in NALC guidance.

#### 4.1.2 To further strengthen account security:

- Initial user account passwords must be generated by the IT provider.
- Default passwords provided by vendors or the IT provider must be changed immediately upon installation or setup.
- Service or System (e.g. website) account passwords are generated and managed by the IT provider.

#### 4.1.3 Access to Passwords:

- Passwords are personal and must not be shared under any circumstances.
- Only the assigned user of an account may access or use the associated password.
- In exceptional cases (e.g., incident response or employee offboarding), access to system credentials may be granted to authorised personnel from the IT provider with appropriate approvals and logging.
- Administrative credentials must be stored securely and only accessible to authorised personnel with a copy provided to the clerk, in a sealed envelope, only to be accessed in an emergency.

#### 4.1.4 Password Storage and Management:

- Passwords must not be stored in plain text or written down in insecure locations.
- Passwords must be stored using a council-approved, encrypted password manager (eg LastPass, Bitwarden or KeePass).

#### 4.1.5 Password Change Requirements:

- Immediately change password if compromise is suspected.

#### 4.1.6 Password Access Control and Logging:

- All access to administrative or shared credentials must be logged and auditable.
- Attempts to access unauthorised passwords will be treated as a security incident.

### 4.2 Authentication

4.2.1 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) should be enabled wherever possible. MFA requires users to provide two or more independent forms of verification—for example, a password (something you know) and a code sent to your phone (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and personal data.

- The council recommends these practices as part of its commitment to robust information security and to support compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- For more guidance, see the NCSC's advice on password security: [NCSC Password Guidance](#)

### 4.3 Responsibility

4.3.1 Users are responsible for creating and maintaining secure passwords for their accounts.

4.3.2 The IT security provider is responsible for:

- Managing system/service credentials.
- Enforcing password policies.
- Auditing and monitoring password-related security practices.

## **5. Monitoring**

- 5.1 The council reserves the right to monitor and maintain logs of computer usage and inspect any files stored on its network, servers, computers, or associated technology to ensure compliance with this policy as well as relevant legislation. Internet, email, and computer usage is continually monitored as part of the council's protection against computer viruses, ongoing maintenance of the system, and when investigating faults.
- 5.2 The council will monitor the use of electronic communications and use of the internet in line with the Investigatory Powers (Interception by Councils etc for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018.
- 5.3 Monitoring of an employee's email and/or internet use will be conducted in accordance with an impact assessment that the council has carried out to ensure that monitoring is necessary and proportionate. Monitoring is in the council's legitimate interests and is to ensure that this policy is being complied with.
- 5.4 The information obtained through monitoring may be shared internally, including with relevant councillors and IT staff if access to the data is necessary for performance of their roles. The information may also be shared with external HR or legal advisers for the purposes of seeking professional advice. Any external advisers will have appropriate data protection policies and protocols in place.
- 5.5 The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted.
- 5.6 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users have a number of rights in relation to their data, including the right to make a subject access request and the right to have data rectified or erased in some circumstances. You can find further details of these rights and how to exercise them in the council's data protection policy.
- 5.7 Such monitoring and the retrieval of the content of any messages may be for the purposes of checking whether the use of the system is legitimate, to find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure, to assist in the investigation of wrongful acts, or to comply with any legal obligation.
- 5.8 The council reserves the right to inspect all files stored on its computer systems in order to assure compliance with this policy. The council also reserves the right to monitor the types of sites being accessed and the extent and frequency of use of the internet at any time, both inside and outside of working hours to ensure that the system is not being abused and to protect the council from potential damage or disrepute.
- 5.9 Any use that the council considers to be 'improper', either in terms of the content or the amount of time spent on this, may result in disciplinary proceedings.

5.10 All computers will be periodically checked and scanned for unauthorised programmes and viruses.

## **6. Remote working**

6.1 Increased IT security measures apply to those who work from home or away from their normal place of work, as follows:

- if logging into the council's systems or services remotely, using computers that either do not belong to the council or are not owned by the user, any passwords must not be saved, and the user must log out at the end of the session deleting all logs and history records within the browser used. If the configuration of the device does not clearly support these actions (for example at an internet café), council services should not be accessed from that device;
- the location and direction of the screen should be checked to ensure confidential information is out of view. Steps should be taken to avoid messages being read by other people, including other travellers on public transport etc;
- any data printed should be collected and stored securely;
- all electronic files should be password protected and the data saved to the council's system/services when accessible;
- papers, files or computer equipment must not be left unattended unless arrangements have been made with a responsible person at the premises for them to be kept in a locked room or cabinet if they are to be left unattended at any time;
- any data should be kept safely and should only be disposed of securely;
- papers, files, data sticks/storage, flash drive or backup hard drives should not be left unattended in cars, except where it is entirely unavoidable for short periods, in which case they must be locked in the boot of the car. If staying away overnight, council data should be taken into the accommodation, care being taken that it will not be interfered with by others or inadvertently destroyed;
- where possible the ability to remotely wipe any mobile devices that process sensitive information should be retained in the case of loss or theft.

6.2 Those issued with a 'dongle' to enable internet access from a laptop via 3G or 4G networks whilst away from their normal workplace should note that the cost of internet access can be very high. Dongles should therefore be used for essential council purposes only, especially if abroad.

Similarly, use of paid for Wi-Fi access, for example at airports should be carefully monitored and restricted to essential council use.

## **7. Email**

7.1 Council email facilities are intended to promote effective and speedy communication on work-related matters. Although email use is encouraged, it can be risky. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users need to be careful not to introduce viruses onto council systems and should take proper account of the security advice below.

7.2 It is often quicker to action an issue by telephone or face to face, rather than via protracted email chains. Emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face or

telephone conversations. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are expected to decide which is the optimum channel of communication to complete their tasks quickly and effectively.

- 7.3 These rules are designed to minimise the legal risks run when using email at work and to guide councillors, staff, and other authorised users as to what may and may not be done. If there is something which is not covered in the policy, councillors, staff, and other authorised users should ask the clerk, rather than assuming they know the right answer.
- 7.4 All councillors, staff, and other authorised users who need to use email as part of their role will normally be given their own council email address and account. The council may, at any time, withdraw email access, should it feel that this is no longer necessary for the role or that the system is being abused.
- 7.5 Email messages sent on the council's account should be for council use only. Personal communications are permitted provided they do not encroach upon working time or interrupt council business in any way. Employees and other authorised users are asked to restrict their personal use to official breaks or outside working hours, and to use their personal email accounts, rather than council addresses.

## **8. Use of the Internet**

### **8.1 Copyright**

8.1.1 Much of what appears on the Internet is protected by copyright. Any copying without permission, including electronic copying, is illegal and therefore prohibited. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 sets out the rules. The copyright laws not only apply to documents but also to software. The infringement of the copyright of another person or organisation could lead to legal action being taken against the council and damages being awarded, as well as disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against the perpetrator.

8.1.2 It is easy to copy electronically, but this does not make it any less an offence. The council's policy is to comply with copyright laws, and not to bend the rules in any way.

8.1.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should not assume that because a document or file is on the Internet, it can be freely copied. There is a difference between information in the 'public domain' (which is no longer confidential or secret information but is still copyright protected) and information which is not protected by copyright (such as where the author has been dead for more than 70 years).

8.1.8.1 Usually, a website will contain copyright conditions; these warnings should be read before downloading or copying.

8.1.8.2 Copyright and database right law can be complicated. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should check with the clerk if unsure about anything.

### **8.2 Trademarks, links and data protection**

8.2.1 The council does not permit the registration of any new domain names or trademarks relating to the council's names or products anywhere in the world, unless authorised to do so. Nor should they add links from any of the council's web pages to any other external sites without checking first with the clerk.

8.2.2 Special rules apply to the processing of personal and sensitive personal data. For further guidance on this, see the council's data protection policy on its website at [bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](http://bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk)

### 8.3 Accuracy of information

8.3.1 One of the main benefits of the internet is the access it gives to large amounts of information, which is often more up to date than traditional sources such as libraries. Be aware that, as the internet is uncontrolled, much of the information may be less accurate than it appears.

## 9. Use of social media

9.1.1 Social media includes; blogs; Wikipedia and other similar sites where text can be posted; multimedia or user generated media sites (YouTube); social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram etc.); text messaging and mobile device communications; virtual worlds (Second Life); and more traditional forms of media such as TV and newspapers. Care should be taken when using social media at any time, either using council systems or at home.

9.1.2 Personal use of social networking/media and chat sites should be restricted to breaks during working hours or outside working hours.

9.1.3 The council recognises the importance of councillors, staff, and other authorised users joining in and helping to shape sector conversation and enhancing its image through blogging and interaction in social media such as WhatsApp or Facebook for example. Therefore, where it is relevant to use social networking sites as part of the individual's position, this is acceptable. However, inappropriate comments and postings can adversely affect the reputation of the council, even if it is not directly referenced. If comments or photographs could reasonably be interpreted as being associated with the council, or if remarks could be regarded as abusive, humiliating, sexual harassment, discriminatory or derogatory, or could constitute bullying or harassment, the council will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence. Councillors, staff and other authorised users should be aware that residents or other local organisations may read councillors, staff and other authorised users' personal weblogs to acquire information, for example, about their work, internal council business and employee morale. Therefore, even if the council is not named, care should be taken with any views expressed.

9.1.4 To protect both the council and its interests, everyone is required to comply with the following rules about social media, whether in relation to their council role or personal social networking sites and irrespective of whether this is during or after working hours:

- Contacts from any of the council's databases should not be downloaded and connected with on LinkedIn, WhatsApp or other social networking sites with electronic address book facilities, unless this has been authorised.
- Any blog that mentions the council, its current work, councillors, employees, other users associated with the council, partner organisations, local groups, suppliers, electors, should identify the author as one of its councillors or employees and state that the views expressed on the blog or website are theirs alone and do not represent the views of the council. Even if the council is not mentioned, care should

be taken with any views expressed on social media sites such as WhatsApp and any views should clearly be stated as the writer's own (eg via a disclaimer statement such as: "The comments and other content on this site are my own and do not represent the positions or opinions of the council"). Writers must not claim or give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the council.

- Any employee who is developing a site or writing a blog that will mention the council, must inform the council that they are writing this and gain agreement before going 'live'.
- The council expects councillors, staff, and other authorised users to be respectful about the council and its current or potential staff, councillors, clerks and authorised users and not to engage in any name calling or any behaviour that will reflect negatively on its reputation. Any unauthorised use of copyright materials, any unfounded or derogatory statements or any misrepresentation could constitute gross misconduct.
- Photos or videos that include employees or other workers wearing uniforms or clothing displaying the council's name or logo should not be posted on social media if it could reflect negatively on the individual, their role, their colleagues or the council. Additionally, photos, videos or audio recordings must not be taken on council premises without explicit permission
- Comments posted by councillors, staff and other authorised users on any sites should be knowledgeable, accurate and professional and should not compromise the council in any way.
- Inappropriate conversations should not take place on any social networking sites such as WhatsApp or Facebook, including forums.
- Any writing about or displaying photos or videos of internal activities that involves current councillors, staff and other authorised persons, might be considered a breach of data protection and a breach of privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, their permission should be gained prior to uploading any such material. Details of any kind relating to any events, conversations, materials or documents that are meant to be private, confidential or internal to the council should not be posted. This may include manuals; procedures; training documents; non-public financial or operational information; personal information regarding other councillors, staff and other authorised users; anything to do with a disciplinary case, grievance, allegation of bullying/harassment or discrimination or legal issue; any other secret, confidential or proprietary information; or information that is subject to confidentiality agreements. This does not affect statutory requirements to publish information including under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Councillors, staff and other authorised users must be aware that they are personally liable for anything that they write or present online (including on an online forum or blog, post, feed or website). Councillors should always be mindful of the Members Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for comments, content, or images that are defamatory, embarrassing, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment. They may also be sued by other organisations, and any individual or council that views their comments, content or images as; defamatory; pornographic; proprietary; harassing; libellous; or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, other councillors, staff and other authorised users can raise grievances for alleged bullying and/or harassment.
- Postings to websites or anywhere on the internet and social media of any kind, or in any press or media of any kind, should not breach copyright or other law or disclose confidential information, defame or make derogatory comments about the council, its councillors or staff, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach data protection legislation.
- Contacts by the media relating to the council, should be referred to the clerk.

- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook must ensure that the information on their profile is accurate and up to date and must update their profile on leaving the council.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use X.com, LinkedIn, or other social media/networking sites for council development purposes must ensure they provide the council with login details, including password(s), so that these sites can be accessed and updated in their absence.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who have left the council must not post any inappropriate comments about the council or its councillors, staff and other authorised users on WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Facebook, X.com or any other social media/networking sites.
- During your employment/ involvement with the council, you may create or obtain access to a variety of professional contacts and confidential information. This includes, but is not limited to, contacts made through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn, where those contacts have been established or maintained in your capacity as a councillor, member of staff or other authorised user. All such contacts will be considered council property and may be subject to disclosure upon request.

9.1.5 Note that the council may, from time to time, monitor external postings on social media sites. Any employee who has a profile (for example on WhatsApp, LinkedIn or Facebook) must not misrepresent themselves or their role with the council. Councillors, staff and other authorised users are also advised that social media sites are not an appropriate place to air council concerns or complaints. These should be raised with the council or formally through the grievance procedure.

9.1.6 It is important to note that the contact details of external stakeholders and information remain the property of the council. In addition, councillors, staff and other authorised users leaving the council will be required to delete all council-related data including external stakeholders' contact details from any personal device/equipment.

## **10. Misuse**

Misuse of IT systems and equipment is not in line with the council's standards of conduct and will be taken seriously. Any inappropriate or unauthorised use may lead to formal action, including disciplinary proceedings or in serious cases, dismissal.

We are constantly working to make our website as accessible and usable as possible.

AbilityNet provides guidance about how to:

- [make your mouse easier to use \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [use your keyboard instead of a mouse \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [talk to your device \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [make your device talk to you \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [make text larger \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [change your colours \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [magnify the screen \(opens in new window\)](#)

Code

Our website has been developed to best practice coding conventions following World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 (WCAG 2.2)

Consistent page headings and titles

A consistent heading structure has been used so that page information is compatible with access technology.

Browsers

The following browsers have been tested for compatibility:

- Google Chrome - latest version
- Firefox (Windows and Mac) - latest version
- Internet Explorer (Windows) v11.0
- Safari (Mac) - latest version

Alternative formats

If you would like a publication in an alternative format please contact us through our [general enquiries form](#).

Leave feedback

We are always happy to receive feedback. Please use our [online feedback form](#) to let us know about any problems you have had or email our website team.

## Addendum report on the memorial bench in St Andrew's churchyard

In March 2026 Cllr Penny Baxter-Newman told Cllr Helen Dauris that she had asked Tony Spearman when he planned to fix the memorial bench in its permanent home in the churchyard. Penny had spoken to Tony because she was anxious that the bench should remain in the position that it is now. Tony replied that the delay was caused by his uncertainty whether the bench was in the correct position. Apparently, Cllr Jeff Kenyon had asked Tony to secure the memorial bench but had not been entirely clear where the bench was to be located.

This conversation jogged my memory. I was not aware of any recent Parish Council discussion of this matter. I looked back at the meeting minutes and found no relevant records since 2022. The location of the bench was discussed at three consecutive Parish Council meetings in 2022.

Extracts from the relevant meeting minutes:

MINUTES OF BUCKLAND & CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING No. 311 Monday 10th January 2022, 7.30pm, The Manor House, Buntingford

In Chairman Cllr Jeff Kenyon's absence, Vice-Chair Cllr Aubrey Holt presided. The Vice-Chairman opened the Meeting at 8.06 pm, the start of the meeting having been deferred for half an hour.

### **311.09 Parish matters**

#### 5. Memorial bench for the Churchyard

The bench and plaque has been delivered, as have the missing fixing bolts. Tony Spearman to install when convenient. It was agreed that the bench is currently sitting in a good position; Cllr Jen Makewell agreed to speak to the Rector to see if it can be permanently located there. Action: JM/JK

MINUTES OF BUCKLAND & CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING No. 312 Monday 7th March 2022, 7.30pm, The Manor House, Buntingford

### **312.10 Parish matters**

#### 6. Memorial bench for the Churchyard

No report was provided on the previous proposal to keep the bench where it is currently placed (contrary to the original agreed location). It was agreed that the Chairman will check with the Rector and Churchwarden to confirm the location is acceptable. Action: JK

*[Cllr Jen Makewell was not present at this meeting]*

MINUTES OF BUCKLAND & CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING No. 314 Monday 9th May 2022, 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Buckland

### **314.08 Parish matters**

## 5. Memorial bench for the Churchyard

It was agreed to leave the bench where it is currently situated, free standing, unless the Diocese raises any objections.

Update on Sunday 5th April 2026.

Cllr Helen Dauris inspected the memorial bench in the churchyard with Churchwarden Liz Jakeman.

- The bench is still situated in or very close to the same location as it has been continuously situated since January 2022.
- The bench is still free standing.

The Churchwarden agreed that this sheltered location is acceptable, sensible and appropriate and it is not necessary to use fixing bolts. Moreover, special permission would be required from the Diocese if concrete were to be used in the churchyard for the fixing bolts. She noted that none of the benches in the Reed churchyard is fixed, despite them all being much lighter as they are wooden. The memorial bench in the Buckland churchyard is made from recycled plastic and is particularly heavy.

It is noted that neither the Chairman or any other parish councillor has the authority to instruct a contractor to do works on behalf of the Parish Council which have not been agreed by the Parish Council.

Cllr Helen Dauris  
Updated on 22/04/26



# *Buckland & Chipping Parish Council*

e mail: council@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk

www.bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk

**Date of Meeting:** 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Item Reference:** Agenda Item 343.13.1

**Report Subject:** Bench in Churchyard

## **1. Purpose of the report**

To remind the Council of its decision taken in May 2022 on the location and fixation of the memorial bench in the Churchyard. Please see the addendum report attached.

## **2. Introduction**

In March 2026 Cllr Penny Baxter-Newman told Cllr Helen Dauris that she had asked Tony Spearman when he planned to fix the memorial bench in its permanent home in the churchyard. Penny had spoken to Tony because she was anxious that the bench should remain in the position that it is now. Tony replied that the delay was caused by his uncertainty whether the bench was in the correct position. The Council considered this question at three separate meetings after the bench had been delivered to the churchyard. The final decision on the location of the bench was taken four years ago.

## **3. Current Position and Proposals**

**Current Position:** the bench is situated in the position agreed on by the Council.

**Proposal:** there is no need to re-consider the position of the bench. It should remain in its present position and, as previously decided by the Council, left free standing. Any instruction that might have been given to Tony Spearman concerning the bench should be cancelled and it should be explained clearly to him that no action is to be taken.

## **4. Financial and Legal Implications**

There are no financial or legal implications to BCPC, no work having been agreed to

Signed .....

by the Council or commissioned with its authority.

## 5. Recommendations

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the **Council reminds the councillors:**

No Councillor has the authority to instruct a contractor to do works in the Council's name which have not been agreed by the Council. The Council is under no responsibility to meet any contractor's costs where works have been commissioned in its name but without its approval. Any Parish Councillor purporting to give instructions in the Parish Council's name but without its approval may be personally liable for any costs or expenses thereby arising.

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Report produced by: | Helen Dauris |
| Date:               | 22/04/26     |

Signed .....



## ***Buckland & Chipping Parish Council***

email: [clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk)

[www.bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](http://www.bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk)

### **Public Meeting to discuss traffic on the A10 held at St Andrew's Church, Buckland Saturday 25 April 2026, 2.30pm**

**Present:** Chris Hinchliff MP, District Cllr David Woolcombe, Parish Cllrs Jeff Kenyon (chair), Penny Baxter-Newman (vice chair), Mark Seymour

**Attending:** S Kubica (parish clerk), 21 members of the public

#### **Minutes**

**1. Cllr Kenyon welcomed everyone to the Meeting** highlighted that each village has in excess of 20 access points onto the A10. Points for discussion; increased volume and speeds of vehicles; accidents on A10 between southern entrance to Chipping and northern exit from Buckland; Buckland Road at the Barkway A10 turning; reduced speed limit to 30 mph throughout the villages and adjoining lanes; number of HGVs through the villages; and introduction of speed cameras to both villages

**2. Cllr Kenyon introduced the MP and other invitees present** and noted the absence of County Cllr Terry Smith and no representative available from the Police

**3. Invite Questions, comments from the Floor** Buckland resident 1: a noticeable increase in HGV traffic avoiding the weight limit and taking shortcuts along unsuitable narrow lanes to the A505, particularly along Whiteley Lane which has potholes and poor surface.

Chipping resident 1: can speed cameras be installed, because motorists already ignore the speed limit signs?

Buckland resident 2: Planning permission should take into account businesses operating large vehicles as the business in Whiteley Lane cannot operate without these

but the road is very narrow and entirely unsuitable for large vehicles. The 30 mph limit along Whiteley Lane is largely ignored. A reduction to 30 mph has been proved to reduce pedestrian deaths.

Chipping resident 2: vehicles entering Chipping do not slow down to 40 mph.

Chipping resident 3: also noted the failure of vehicles to slow down when entering Chipping, making it difficult to pull out from properties onto the highway. There were several examples of motor incidents which included vehicles ending up in the front garden and almost hitting the house.

Chipping resident 4: a reduced speed limit for Chipping should extend to include the turn off to Sandon.

Chipping resident 5: during speed checks most drivers are only just outside the limit, with drivers in excess of the speed limit causing a hazard and ignoring signs, so could speed camera signs be used and a community speed watch initiative set up as a cheaper solution?

Buckland resident 3: in favour of 30 mph in Buckland with an increase in young families and older people in the village, the traffic coming through at speed makes it difficult to cross to the post box, defibrillator and bus stop. Barkway Road is popular with pedestrians and the national speed limit sign is not appropriate for modern traffic.

Buckland resident 4: reminded the parish council that many years ago Highways visited with engineers who deemed the route along Barkway Road as unsuitable for the purposes of HGVs transporting supplies between Anstey Quarry and Barkway Golf Course and refused permission for this purpose.

Chipping resident 6: should village residents provide a list of motor vehicle incidents as the number has increased in the last 10 years?

Chipping resident 7: struggles to pull out onto the A10 due to a restricted view to the right and hedges and vehicles approaching at speed. In the time taken to pull out, a vehicle will appear. Can there be buffer zones to reduce the speed limit?

Chipping resident 4: traffic problems are impacted by M11 closures.

Chipping resident 8: noise should be taken into account, as rumble strips are loud and would not be popular with residents and signage should be proportionate for the countryside setting.

Resident: signs and village gates might be more affordable measures.

#### **4. Invite MP and invitees for their thoughts**

**Chris Hinchliff MP**: confirmed that there is nothing in law that requires a fatality before action is taken and that it is very encouraging to have the engagement of the local community. Chris will support a common sense approach with all the ideas presented and is able to make representations to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for measures to reduce HGVs. Ultimately, however, this is the responsibility of HCC Highways who are likely to require a speed and volume survey. The first port of call should be a request to the County Cllr to see what can be funded from the Highways Locality Budget.

**District Cllr David Woollcombe:** noted the increase in HGVs diverting to avoid the weight restriction is a problem. David proposes the continuation of 50 mph along the bypass and advocates action before the change to a unitary authority, noting that the risk of fatalities is of real concern. David is happy to support the proposals.

**Cllr Jeff Kenyon:** noted that residents present were in favour of average speed cameras for the entire stretch between Buckland and Chipping. The parish councillors confirmed that HCC hasn't assessed speed and volume, but Police carried out monitoring around 10 years ago. Police found it difficult to find a place to carry out speed checks. There is also concern over Metropolitan Police carrying out high speed vehicle training along the road including motorcycle training.

**Cllr Mark Seymour:** recalls a parish council meeting which discussed similar issues but action is still awaited.

**Cllr Penny Baxter-Newman:** highlighted the difficulties in crossing the road with only one spot offering slightly better visibility.

**5. Sum up Meeting** The MP and District Cllr will support a statement containing the suggestions discussed and including evidence of the history of incidents. Attendees are asked to submit details of incidents over the years to the clerk: [clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bucklandandchipping-pc.gov.uk) Cllr Woollcombe to raise police driver training issues with the Buntingford Town Mayor (a former Police officer).

**6. Propose way(s) forward** Proposal to extend 50 mph all the way round the bypass to the north end of Buckland, with 30 mph and average speed cameras through the 2 settlements with 30 mph extended south to the Sandon exit and a pelican crossing in each of the settlements. The MP and District Cllr will support the statement and ask HCC to attend.