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## COUNTY COUNCILLOR ROB HUMBY'S REPORT JANUARY 2023

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### **New County Council Cabinet Portfolios**

Reminder for the new County Council Cabinet Portfolios as of 1 January 2023.

#### **Adult's Health and Care:**

- Executive Lead Member, Cllr Liz Fairhurst; and
- Executive Member, Cllr Jan Warwick

#### **Children's Services:**

- Executive Lead Member, Cllr Edward Heron; and
- Executive Member, Cllr Steve Forster

#### **Universal Services:**

- Executive Lead Member, Cllr Nick Adams-King; and
- Executive Member, Cllr Russell Oppenheimer

#### **Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services**

- Leader, Cllr Rob Humby; and
- Deputy Leader, Cllr Roz Chadd

Cllr Kirsty North will continue as Cabinet Member for **HR, Performance, Communications and Inclusion and Diverstiy**

## **It's 'Time to Talk' about mental wellbeing**

On the national Time to Talk Day (2 February 2023), Hampshire County Council is reminding residents about its Chat About scheme that aims to help people connect with others to alleviate loneliness and improve wellbeing

[It's 'Time to Talk' about mental wellbeing | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

## **Hampshire County Council sets out £2.6 billion spending plans for local services amid difficult economic times in 2023/24**

Spending plans for 2023/24, totalling £2.6bn, to deliver hundreds of local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents will be considered by Hampshire County Council's Cabinet next week

[Hampshire County Council sets out £2.6 billion spending plans for local services amid difficult economic times in 2023/24 | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

## **Free access to 1921 census in Hampshire County Council libraries and Record Office**

Residents will be able to delve into history free of charge from 1 February when the 1921 census becomes available at all Hampshire County Council libraries and the Record Office in Winchester

[Free access to 1921 census in Hampshire County Council libraries and Record Office | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

## **Hampshire community projects to benefit from £86,000 funding boost**

Councillor Jan Warwick, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Younger Adults and Health and Wellbeing, has awarded over £86,000 in grants to five Hampshire voluntary groups to help each continue providing support to carers and those cared for within local communities across the county

[Hampshire community projects to benefit from £86,000 funding boost | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

## **County Council awards £100k to support community renewable energy**

A grant of up to £100,000 has been awarded to Community Energy South (CES), ensuring continued support to resident groups, helping them develop and manage community-based renewable energy projects in Hampshire. The funding will be available over the next two years as part of the Authority's activity to support the county to become Carbon Neutral by 2050 and be resilient to a two degree rise in temperature

[County Council awards £100k to support community renewable energy | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)

## **Latest County Council Leader's grants to benefit culture and communities across Hampshire**

The Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Rob Humby, has awarded £67,800 in one-off community grants to five organisations across East Hampshire, Winchester, Test Valley and Fleet. These time-limited grants enable projects to provide community benefit and help local communities thrive, or help local organisations become financially self-supporting

[Latest County Council Leader's grants to benefit culture and communities across Hampshire | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Major investment proposed for Hampshire schools to create more school places**

Ten new schools could be on the horizon for Hampshire, as the County Council sets out its provisional capital projects for Children's Services

[Major investment proposed for Hampshire schools to create more school places | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## **County Council seek residents' assistance and urges caution after drain cover thefts**

Road users across Hampshire are being urged to be vigilant after a recent spate of drain cover thefts – leaving deep openings in the road surface which could cause a potential hazard to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and also result in significant expense to council taxpayers

[County Council seek residents' assistance and urges caution after drain cover thefts | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## **County Council Trading Standards welcomes successful prosecution of fraudulent roofing operations**

Hampshire County Council Trading Standards has welcomed a successful outcome in the courts relating to fraud and money laundering

[County Council Trading Standards welcomes successful prosecution of fraudulent roofing operation | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Hampshire's Wessex Dance Academy recognised in 2023 New Year's Honours**

The manager of a contemporary dance programme helping to transform the lives of vulnerable young people has been recognised in the 2023 New Year's Honours. Clare Hobbs, Hampshire County Council's Manager of Wessex Dance Academy, has been awarded a British Empire Medal for her services to young people in the county

[Hampshire's Wessex Dance Academy recognised in 2023 New Year's Honours | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Services provided by Hampshire County Council include:**

- [Education and Learning](#) including supporting Hampshire schools. (excluding privately run Academy Schools)
- [Services for children and families](#) including adoption and fostering, safeguarding, and support for young people.
- [Maintenance of Hampshire's roads](#) (except motorways and trunk roads which are the responsibility of National Highways), [licensing](#) for providers who need to work on the highway, and support for operators of [public transport](#).
- [Planning](#) applications for mineral extraction, waste management and public buildings.
- Provision of [social care and health](#) in Hampshire.
- The [Hampshire Library Service](#).
- The [Countryside Service](#), looking after [rights of way](#), and many of the county's [important green spaces](#)
- [Household Waste Recycling Centres](#) where residents can dispose of unwanted items. (District, borough or city councils manage kerbside household waste collections)
- [Trading Standards](#), ensuring fair trading in Hampshire, by supporting the county's businesses and protecting Hampshire consumers.

### **District, borough and city councils**

District, borough and city councils provide services such as:

- Household waste collection
- Domestic planning applications
- Council Tax collection
- Housing

[Find your local district or borough council](#)

### **Parish, community and town councils**

These councils operate at a level below district and borough councils and in some cases, unitary authorities.

They are elected and can help on a number of local issues, like providing:

- allotments
- public clocks
- bus shelters
- community centres
- play areas and play equipment
- grants to help local organisations
- consultation on neighbourhood planning

MEETING REPORT: Climate Change/ Food Waste Action Week

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 138

The Parish Council agreed in the January Full Council meeting to hold a village wide climate change meeting before the March Parish Council meeting. The meeting would start at 6pm.

I have asked Stuart Mills from WinCan to speak at the meeting and he is willing to attend and asked what the Council would like him to talk about. Another resident has volunteered to speak at the meeting on the work that is already being done by the Church.

The Clerk has also had other residents interested in volunteering.

The Council need to decide how to structure the meeting and what they would like to get out of the meeting.

- Do the Council wish to declare a Climate Emergency at the beginning of the meeting?
- Do the Council want the village to put together a Climate Change Action Plan?
- Do the Council want the residents to lead this and have a Cllr represent the Council or do the council want to lead on this?
- Would the Council like to invite another Parishes Climate group to the meeting?

Cllr Hurlock attended the WCC Open Forum on Carbon Neutrality Roadmap for Winchester District on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

## **FOOD ACTION WEEK**

I have been contact by Winchester Food Partnership to ask if the Parish Council would like to be involved in Food Action Week.

*Dear Parish Councillors,*

*I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of Winchester Food Partnership, a Winchester based charity that is focused on reducing food insecurity and increasing the environmental sustainability of food.*

*As you may be aware, Food Waste Action Week is taking place 6-12th of March. The week is a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of the issue of food waste and encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to take action to reduce it.*

*I am reaching out to inquire whether you are aware of Food Waste Action Week and, if so, whether your council has any plans in place to participate in the campaign. We understand that some parish councils may have already been contacted about this, while others may not have.*

*If you are interested in participating in Food Waste Action Week, we would be happy to discuss any support or resources that you may need. Our goal is to work together to raise awareness of the issue of food waste and promote actions that can help to reduce it.*

*Please let us know if you have any questions or if there is anything else that we can do to support you in this effort.*

*Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing back from you soon.*

MEETING REPORT: Southampton Airport

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 139

Southampton Airport has been in the process of seeking a broad range of stakeholders' views on the way in which Southampton Airport should progress its part of a UK-wide initiative to modernise the country's airspace, known as the Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS). This process is known as an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP). However, given the outbreak of COVID-19, Southampton Airport took the decision in 2020 to postpone this work.

During 2022, Southampton Airport was able to recommence its ACP. Over the course of the year, the airport are engaging with their existing stakeholders, in addition to any new relevant stakeholders. They have held a number of workshops and received feedback from a wide range of stakeholder groups.

They will soon be submitting their Stage 2 documents to the CAA for assessment in a December 2022 gateway. Following completion of Stage 2, they will commence Stage 3, which includes a full public consultation on the Comprehensive List of Options.

### **Airspace Change Programme**

You can view the latest status of the project on the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) website along with all supporting documents: <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk/PublicProposalArea?pid=115>

The Airspace Change Proposal follows the CAA's CAP1616 guidelines.

In December 2022 Southampton Airport released the Step 2B – Initial Option Appraisal document. This document we believe will form part of the next consultation. It is a 67-page document, which needs to be understood by the Council

The Council would like to set up an advisory group with residents and Cllrs to look through the document and report back to the Council on the document ready for the next consultation. There are two residents who would like to volunteer.



MEETING REPORT: King Coronation

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 140

This year on Saturday 6 May King Charles will celebrate his coronation. There is £500 in the budget for the coronation.

It would be a good idea for the Council to find out all the proposed events that are happening in the village and put together a timeline of events that can be advertised, as a poster on the notice boards, via OIS and on the website.

The Council needs to consider suggestions/ requests for funding out of the budget.

Perhaps the Council would consider buying a small keepsake for all the children that attend Owslebury Primary School, or for every household in the village. Such as a pin, coin, or Mug.

Here are some examples:



Or would the Council like to spend the money on a new commemorative bench:



Or a time capsule:



MEETING REPORT: HALC Articles of Association

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 141

The Council have received an email from Cudridge Parish Councils Chairman which is below:

*As you probably know, Winchester District of Local Councils put forward the attached amendments to HALC's proposed Articles of Association. At a recent board meeting, our director (Jon Woodman) was outvoted, and the Articles will be presented – unamended – to an EGM on 23 February.*

*Unless we have a good turn-out at the EGM of people who oppose the new Articles, HLC will be run by a board appointed by the board, with no guarantee that each district association will have a director. The quorum for board meetings will be reduced to three out of a possible ten, and those three would be able to remove a director on a majority vote. This is not a recipe for good governance.*

*My goal in suggesting amendments was to safeguard member councils, without weakening the laudable goal of modernising the Articles.*

*I should very much appreciate your support for these amendments, even if this means rejecting the proposed new Articles on 23 February. Each council has one vote, so a single person attending from each council would be sufficient.*

I have attached the amendments for the Council to digest. The Council will need to decide if they would like to support Cudridge PC's amendments to HALC's Articles of Association.

# Winchester District Association Amendments to HALC Articles

The proposed articles do not define an “Executive”, despite the fact that HALC has traditionally had meetings of an executive group made up of the executive committees of the district associations whose member councils make up HALC membership. WDALC regrets this omission, but has not sought to remedy it.

Amendment	Rationale
<p><b>Document Structure</b></p> <p>Title attribute of document to be set in source file, so it appears in window title of Adobe Reader or other PDF viewer.</p> <p>Footer of each page should contain date of issue.</p>	<p>It should be immediately possible to determine what the document is, and when the version was issued.</p> <p>Approved documents should state period of validity.</p> <p>HALC should conform to ISO9001.</p>
<p><b>General</b></p> <p>Delete all qualification of the word “director” as executive or non-executive. This affects clauses 22, 23, 24 and 26</p>	<p>This distinction implies that employees of the company can be directors, which is contrary to the long-standing practice of the Association.</p>
<p><b>Clause 1: Interpretation</b></p> <p>Insert new definition before 1.1.8, reading:</p> <p><b>District association:</b> an organisation formed of the members within the boundaries of a district council.</p>	<p>Because of the vital role of district associations in the governance of HALC, they need to be defined in the articles.</p>
<p><b>Directors</b></p> <p>Insert new clause before 7, reading:</p> <p>One director shall be nominated by each District Association within Hampshire.</p>	<p>Needed to clarify the power of the District Associations in HALC Governance</p>
<p><b>15. Quorum for Directors’ Meetings</b></p> <p>Replace 15.2 with:</p> <p>Subject to Article 15.3, the quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of directors shall not be fewer than half the number of Eligible Directors.</p>	<p>A quorum of three, alongside the ability of the board to appoint two additional directors, makes it easy for a meeting to be used to “ambush” a director, such that decisions can be taken against the known views of that director.</p> <p>With 7 directors, the quorum would be 4.</p>

<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<p><b>17. Casting Vote</b></p> <p>There needs to be an explicit statement of what happens to the proposal in the event of equal votes. WDALC would be happy with either:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Remove the word “not”</p> <p>Or: add the wording:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In this event, the proposal shall fail.</p>	<p>Without one of these changes, the articles do not prescribe the outcome in the event of equality of votes.</p> <p>Usual convention is to maintain the <i>status quo ante</i>, as would happen if the proposal fails.</p>
<p><b>21. Method of appointing Directors</b></p> <p>Add sub-clause 21.1.3 reading:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">By virtue of nomination by a District Association of Local Councils in Hampshire.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Each District Association shall be permitted to nominate a deputy to attend should its director be unable to attend.</p>	<p>The historic practice of HALC should not be undermined by vagueness.</p> <p>This will increase board attendance and geographical coverage, and avoid the risk of failing to reach a quorum.</p>
<p><b>22. Termination of Director’s Appointment</b></p> <p>Add subclause 22.1.8 reading</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The District Association that nominated the director nominates a different person as its director.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">In 22.2, Delete: “non-executive”</p>	<p>Required to maintain District Associations’ right to determine who should represent them on the HALC board.</p> <p>Avoid any implication that employees can become directors.</p>
<p><b>23. Terms and Retirement...</b></p> <p>Delete all five instances of “non-executive”</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p><b>24. Directors’ Remuneration</b></p> <p>Delete subclause 24.2.1</p> <p>Add new subclause 24.6, reading:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Directors’ remuneration shall be published in the accounts of the company.</p>	<p>24.2.1 is redundant if executive directors do not exist.</p> <p>Good governance requires that members be made aware of remuneration that directors award their number under clause 24.2</p>
<p><b>26. Number of Directors</b></p> <p>Replace sub-clause 26.1.2 with</p> <p>No more than two of the directors at any given time shall not be nominees of a District Association.</p>	<p>Permits the board to appoint up to two directors in addition to one from each District Association. It’s not obvious why this provision is needed, but the flexibility might be beneficial (e.g. for the Secretary or the NALC representative).</p>

<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<p><b>29. Honorary Officers</b></p> <p>Either remove this clause, or modify 29.2 to read:</p> <p>The directors shall be entitled to appoint Honorary Officers in such numbers and for such term of appointment up to a maximum of three years as the Board in its entire discretion may decide.</p>	<p>Recent correspondence indicates that members do not view this provision as necessary.</p> <p>However, the provision does not <b>require</b> the board to appoint honorary officers, so is not harmful. The addition of a term limit will ensure that honorary officers do not remain in post after losing touch with council work.</p>
<p><b>30. Change of Company Name</b></p> <p>Either delete 30.1.1 or change it to:</p> <p>A unanimous decision of the directors; or</p>	<p>It is not obvious why the board should have the right to change the name of the company without the approval of the members. If there were a legal need to change the name, the board would show unanimity.</p>

MEETING REPORT: Lengthsman

DATE: 16/01/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 144 (a)

The Full Council need to consider if they would like to stay in the Lengthsman Scheme for the year 2023/24. Currently the Lengthsman visits 4 times a year for 10 hours per visit and carries out various works such as clearing the grips, drains and ditches, the removal of vegetation, cleaning the bus shelters, removing vegetation from road and village signs.

The term Lengthsman was coined in the 1700s. Originally, it referred to someone who kept a "length" of road neat, tidy and passable. Employed originally by the 'Lords of the Manor' and latterly by parish councils, they would keep grass and weeds down in verges, keep drainage ditches clear and repair fences. Litter was cleared and instances are recorded of wildflowers being planted and tended.

The current role of a Lengthsman is to clear gullies, ditches, drains and grips. Remove vegetation obstructing signs, removal of basal tree growth from highway trees and removal of vegetation on any rights of way. Cleaning of traffic signs and bus shelters. Painting of benches and notice boards. Or any small jobs around the village, such as litter picking which Hampshire County Council should carry out but do not have the time/ money to complete.

Hampshire County Council pay for this scheme, the money (£1,000 per parish) is paid to the lead parish in the cluster, which is Colden Common Parish Council. The lead parish organises when the Lengthsman visits each parish.

Cllr Humby attended the Full Council meeting in November and confirmed that the Lengthsmen scheme WILL continue next year and indicated he would support it continuing for many further years. This is great news for the Parishes as many parishes have queried how HCC expected their land to be maintained otherwise.

The lead Council have spoken to Premier Grounds (The current Lengthsman) and as an initial indicator, they would have to increase the charge to at least £30 per hour for the contract.

Out of the 13 Parishes in our cluster, 3 reduced their visits to 10 hours x 4 visits per year for 2022/23, to stick within the £1,000 per Parish funding, with the remaining 10 Parishes sticking at 12 hours x 4 visits per year and paying an additional £200 funding.

A price increase of £30 per hour would mean potentially only 3 visits of 10hr per year with the balance being carried forward to a future year. Or each Parish might want to make a small contribution towards keeping the visits longer.

The other option is to go out to tender to see what other companies are offering.

The Council need to consider the following:

1. To remain in the scheme for 2023/24.
2. To go out to tender or have Premier Grounds as the Cluster's contractor.
3. To agree on how many hours the Council would like the Lengthsman for in 2023/24 if the PC agrees to remain in the scheme.
4. To agree if the PC would like to contribute extra money for more hours.

MEETING REPORT: Community Engagement Officer

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 144 (b)

I contact the Parish Councils Hampshire Countryside ranger after the Januarys meeting when the Council agreed to ask for more volunteers to be path wardens. I contacted the Parish Councils Ranger to ask if they would come to the village to carryout the path warden training if the Council received more volunteers. They do still do the training and would be more than happy to facilitate this in the future.

The Community Engagement Ranger also asked to meet on Thursday 2 March at 2:30pm to discuss this and to allow them to introduce themselves to myself and the Council to explain their role in more detail,

They have included a poster/pdf that they have forwarded to parish councils to use if we wish to advertise for path wardens/volunteers. Which I have attached below.



## Looking after your Rights of Way



The south Access Team looks after all the Rights of Way (RoW) in south Hampshire, maintaining them and making them safe for your enjoyment

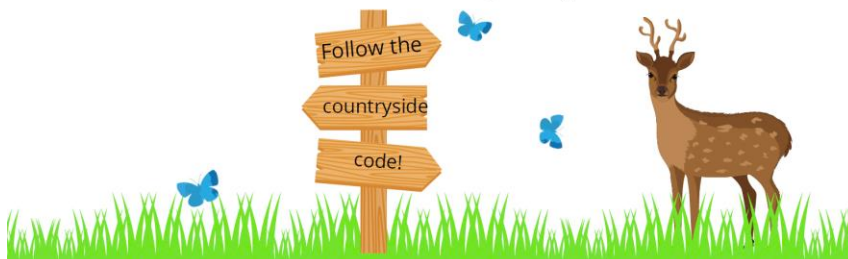
### You can help!

We always welcome volunteers for our task days. Tasks are varied and include ditch crossings, gate installations and vegetation clearance to name a few!

No previous experience needed, just enthusiasm!

Check out our website for more information:  
[www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/volunteering](http://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/volunteering)

You can also email [PROW@hants.gov.uk](mailto:PROW@hants.gov.uk)







**Owslebury Parish Council  
2022/23**

PAYMENTS	Amount (£)	Payee	Payment Type
124	195.00	WCC (Dog Bin Oct - Dec 22)	
125	16.00	3 (Phone)	DD
126	16.87	IONOS Website	DD
127	21.25	OPMC - Hall Hire Jan	
128	438.40	Clerks Salary - Jan	
129	109.60	HMRC	
130	562.50	CiLCA - Clerk Training Cost	Paid
131	875.34	Swanmore PC (ACSO) - Jan	

Voucher	Amount (£)	Payee	
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
11	50,025.14	Fixed Term Deposit & Interest.	

Chairman:

Date:

RFO:

Date:

**Bank and short term deposit balances/bank reconciliaton**

1. BANK BALANCES

31/01/2023

<b>CASH BOOK BALANCE</b>		£	£
Balances 1st April 2022			23,938.59
income			85,793.89
expenses			-35,639.58
<b>CASH BOOK BALANCE</b>			<b>74,092.90</b>
add u/p cheques			1,655.59
less o/s receipts			-45.00
Control total			<u>75,703.49</u>
<b>BANK STATEMENTS</b>			
Treasurers account	75,703.49		
Business 30 Day notice	0.00		
Business Instant access	0.00		
Per bank statements			<u>75,703.49</u>
Difference			<u>-0.00</u>

2. SHORT TERM DEPOSIT

3. TOTAL OF BANK AND SHORT TERM DEPOSITS

74,092.90

MEETING REPORT: Fixed Term Deposit Accounts

DATE: 13/02/23

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 145 (c)

At the January meeting the Council asked the Clerk to research other fixed term deposit accounts for the Council to invest £25,000.00.

I found several banks that deal specifically with local government which were CCLA, Insignis, Unity Bank and Lloyds, who all have fixed term deposit accounts that run for a year.

The Council will not be able to invest in the Unity and Insignis, Unity Bank have a minimum deposit of £500,000.00 and Insignis have a minimum deposit of £250,000.00.

The Council could invest with CCLA in their **Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF)**.

The PSDF is a cash based, AAA rated, money market fund (MMF) with daily dealing and access to cash. The fund is low risk, provides good liquidity and good yield. There is a high level of diversification in this fund and only top-quality credit rated organisations are used. There is an initial deposit of £25k but this amount can be withdrawn to zero and the account used as and when required. Interest is paid monthly on this account. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb, the yield is 3.7588%.

Many local Councils have investments with CCLA, such as Winchester City Council, Four Marks Parish Council, West End Parish Council.

The Council could invest the full £50K and be able to withdraw any money needed for the Beech Grove project when it is needed, however while it is not needed gain interest on the money.

The Council could re-invest in the Lloyds Fixed term Deposit Account, there are several term lengths for this account, 3 months, 6 months, 9 months or 12 months. The current interest rates are:

3 months: 1.20%  
6 months: 2.70%  
9 months: 2.75%  
12 months: 2.80%

The Council cannot access the money for the length of the term.

My recommendation would be to invest the Councils money with CCLA in the Public Sector Deposit Fund and take advantage of the function of accessing the money during the term and the monthly interest rate.



# GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Adopted by the Council on 13 February 2023



## **Disciplinary Procedure**

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all council employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct whilst at work or representing the council. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all. This procedure is prepared in accordance with the dismissal and dispute resolution procedures as set out in the Employment Act 2008 and the ACAS Code of Practice APR 2009.

## **PRINCIPLES**

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated. At every stage in the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him or her and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made. At all formal stages the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague during the disciplinary interview.

No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct when the penalty of dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice may be applied.

An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.

The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

## **THE PROCEDURE FOR MISCONDUCT and GROSS MISCONDUCT**

The following list provides examples of misconduct which will normally give rise to formal disciplinary action:

- Unauthorised absence from work
- Persistent short-term and/or frequent absences from work without a medical reason
- Lateness for work or poor time keeping
- Inappropriate standard of dress
- Minor breaches of Health and Safety or other Society rules or procedures
- Failure to perform your job to the standard expected or in line with your job description/objectives
- Time wasting
- Disruptive behaviour
- Misuse of the council's facilities
- Refusal to carry out reasonable requests or instructions
- Failure to follow an agreed council Procedure

This list is not exhaustive and offences of a similar nature will result in disciplinary action being instigated.

The following list provides examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, or other acts of dishonesty
- Fighting, assault on another person
- Deliberate damage to property of the council, its workers or members
- Gross incompetence in the conduct of work
- Gross negligence which results in the council or employees being put at risk.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or excessive alcohol
- Acts of incitement towards or actual acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation including on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Serious acts of insubordination
- Serious breach of duty to keep information of the council, its service providers and its clients confidential



- Unauthorised entry to computer records
- Serious breach of the council's, Health & Safety Policy
- Any action, whether committed on or off the premises, that is likely to or does bring the council into disrepute
- Serious negligence which causes or might causes significant loss, damage or injury
- Accepting bribes or incentive payments from suppliers
- Unauthorised use of Society funds or credit
- Working with an external agency to provide information which would be detrimental to and cause commercial risk to the council.

This list is not exhaustive and other offences of a similar gravity will result in disciplinary action being instigated at Gross Misconduct level which carries a potential penalty of dismissal. Gross Misconduct is generally any conduct which places extreme pressure on the mutual trust which exists in an employment relationship.

## **INFORMAL ACTION**

Minor misconduct will be dealt with informally usually in a confidential one-to-one meeting between the employee and line manager. In the case of the Clerk being the individual against whom there is a complaint or allegation the matter should be handled discreetly by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and involve an informal meeting initially. However, where the matter is more serious or informal action has not brought about the necessary improvement the following procedure will be used:

## **FORMAL ACTION**

The level of warning you may receive for misconduct/gross misconduct will depend on how serious the council considers the alleged actions to be and your previous conduct in all the circumstances. In the event of alleged gross misconduct the formal process may commence at Stage 4 –see 3.4 below.

### **Disciplinary Letters**

If there is a concern about an employee's conduct or behaviour, then a letter will be given to the employee advising them of the allegation(s) and reasons why this is unacceptable. The letter should invite the employee to attend a meeting at which the alleged misconduct will be discussed and will inform the employee of their right to be accompanied to the meeting. The letter will specify at which stage the disciplinary procedure is being invoked (see 4 stages below) and if invoked at Stage 4 for Gross Misconduct the letter will warn that a potential outcome could be dismissal. The time, date and venue of the meeting will also be advised. Any documents to be produced at the meeting will also be provided.

### **Disciplinary Meetings**

The time and location of a disciplinary meeting should be agreed with the employee and it should be held in a private location with no interruptions. This will normally be without undue delay but allowing the employee to prepare their case e.g. within 5 days of the letter being sent, where practically possible. At the meeting the manager (or in the case of the Clerk being disciplined, the Chairman) will state the complaint against the employee and go through the evidence which has been gathered. The employee will also be allowed to ask questions, present evidence and call witnesses if advance notice has been given that they will do so.

If the employee is unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseeable reasons out of their control (e.g. illness) then the council will reasonably rearrange the meeting. However, if the employee fails to attend the meeting without good reason the meeting can be held in the employee's absence.

## **OUTCOMES AND PENALTIES**



## **Stage 1 - Oral Warning**

In the instance of a first complaint that conduct does not meet acceptable standards, the employee will normally be given a formal ORAL WARNING. They will be advised of;

- the reason for the warning,
- that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure,
- the improvement that is required and the timescales for achieving this improvement,
- together with a review date and any support available (where applicable) and
- their right of appeal.

A brief note of the oral warning will be kept but it will be spent after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct.

## **Stage 2 - Written Warning**

If the offence is a serious one, or if further to previous formal disciplinary action, a WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee by the Line Manager. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept on file but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct.

## **Stage 3 – Final Written Warning**

If there is still a failure to improve and conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, or the misconduct is sufficiently serious, a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will normally be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept by the Line Manager (or in the case of the Clerk being disciplined by the Chairman) but it will be spent after 12 months (in exceptional cases the period may be longer) subject to satisfactory conduct.

## **Stage 4 – Dismissal or other sanctions**

If conduct is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards, or where the Society reasonably believes Gross Misconduct has occurred, DISMISSAL may result. Only the appropriately convened hearing panel can take the decision to dismiss an employee. The employee will be given a written statement of allegations against them, invited to a meeting and then be notified in writing of the reasons for the decision taken at the hearing. Penalties at this stage may include dismissal with notice or summary dismissal (i.e. without any notice), Final Written Warning with/without demotion, loss of pay or loss of seniority. If dismissal is the outcome, the employee will be advised of the date on which employment will terminate. In all cases the employee has a right of appeal.

Very exceptionally, if an offence of Gross Misconduct is extremely serious an employee can be dismissed immediately without a meeting. In this situation a letter setting out reasons for dismissal would be sent to the employee offering the opportunity for an appeal hearing.

## **SUSPENSION**

If you are accused of an act of gross misconduct, you may be suspended from work on full pay while the council investigates the alleged offence. Only the appropriately convened committee has the power to suspend. This enables a swift and thorough investigation to occur. Whilst suspended pending disciplinary investigation regular contact with a nominated person at the council will be maintained although access to premises, equipment or systems may be denied. The Investigator who compiles evidence for the disciplinary hearing must play no part in the subsequent decision-making to ensure impartiality. Councils need to consider the implications of such arrangements on its hearing and appeal panel plans early on in the disciplinary process.



## **APPEALS**

The Appeals stage of the disciplinary process is part of the Code of Practice to which an employee has a right. It can be exercised after any of the stages of disciplinary action for Misconduct/Poor Performance or Gross Misconduct.

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should inform the Chairman within five working days, in writing and giving reasons for the appeal. An Appeal may be raised if:

- The employee thinks the finding or penalty is unfair
- New evidence has come to light
- The employee thinks that the procedure was not applied properly.

Where possible the Appeal will be heard by a separate panel of elected members who have not been involved in the original disciplinary hearing, who will view the evidence with impartiality. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or accredited Trade Union official or lay member at the appeal hearing. The outcome of the appeal and reasons for it will be advised to the employee as soon as possible after the meeting and be confirmed in writing. At the Appeal hearing any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased. The decision taken at the Appeal hearing will be final.

## **THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED**

At each formal stage of disciplinary interview an employee has the right to be accompanied and can make a reasonable request for such a person to accompany them. An employee can ask any other employee or a trade union representative or an appropriately accredited official employed by a trade union to accompany them, to give support and help them prepare for the disciplinary interview. This right is enshrined in the 1999 Employment Relations Act. As this is an internal process there is no provision to have any external person accompany or represent an employee e.g. partner, parent, solicitor etc. The companion can address the hearing, put and sum up the employee's case, respond on behalf of the worker to any views expressed at the meeting, confer with the employee. The companion cannot however answer questions on the employee's behalf or address the hearing if the employee does not wish them to or prevent the employee explaining their case.

## **HEARING PANELS**

The SLCC advise that councils establish hearing panels to hear disciplinary and grievance hearings on an annual basis so that if a dispute does arise in the workplace the elected members involved are already trained and briefed on their duties as a hearing or appeal panel member. In situations where individual members are implicated in the dispute or have undertaken an investigatory role then they will need to be substituted as panel members.

## **NOTE-TAKING**

It is highly recommended that a note-taker be provided to every meeting/hearing which arises as a result of a disciplinary process as Employment Tribunals are particularly keen to view contemporaneous notes of events which have led to an employment dispute. Councils will need to give this requirement careful consideration in order to respect employee confidentiality.

## **GRIEVANCES RAISED DURING DISCIPLINARIES**

In some circumstances when a disciplinary process has commenced an employee chooses to exercise their right to raise an internal grievance about the employment relationship with the council or individual Members. The SLCC recommends, in line with ACAS advice, that disciplinary matters are placed on hold until grievances have been aired and actions towards a resolution have been



progressed. In exceptional circumstances it is pragmatic to deal with the two disputes concurrently but SLCC would advise caution and specialist advice should be sought if this arises.

## **CRIMINAL CHARGES OR CONVICTIONS**

If an employee is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence this does not automatically give rise to a disciplinary situation. Consideration needs to be given to how a charge or conviction may affect an employee's ability to undertake his or her job duties and their relationships with the employer, colleagues, subordinates or customers.

## **GETTING IT WRONG**

Failure to follow the ACAS Code of Practice (available at [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)) can lead to an Employment Tribunal awarding an uplift of an award against the council of up to 25%. Tribunals dealing with unfair dismissal claims are particularly interested in whether the employer followed a procedure and whether the employer acted fairly and reasonably. One way in which to avoid such a penalty is to have an agreed procedure, communicate that procedure to staff and Members, revisit and review the procedure regularly and have some training for those who are expected to operate the procedure.



# Dealing with Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints Policy

Adopted by the Parish Council on 26 July 2021

Reviewed 13 February 2023

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Dealing with a complaint is a straightforward process but in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the council. This can happen either while their complaint is being investigated, or once the council has finished dealing with the complaint.

1.2 Owslebury Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints equitably, comprehensively, and in a timely manner.

1.3 We will not normally limit the contact which complainants have with council staff or offices.

1.4 We do not expect Councillors or staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening and may include:

- Using abusive or foul language on the telephone, face-to-face, by letter. Fax, email, text, etc
- Any form of intimidating or threatening behaviour
- Sending multiple emails
- Leaving multiple voicemails

1.5 We will take action to protect staff and Councillors from such behaviour. If a complainant behaves in a way that is unreasonably persistent or vexatious, we will follow this policy.

1.6 Raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses, for example if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to the complaint being regarded as vexatious.

1.7 Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause them to be labelled unreasonably persistent.

## **2. Aim of this policy**

2.1 The aim of this policy is to contribute to our overall aim of dealing with all complaints in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

2.2 It sets out how the Parish Council will decide which complaints will be treated as vexatious or unreasonably persistent, and what the Parish Council will do in those circumstances. The policy is for the information of staff, Councillors and residents.

## **3. Definitions**

3.1 We have adopted the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) definition of "unreasonable complainant behaviour" and "unreasonable persistent complaints"

3.2 We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints as those which, because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contacts with the council, hinder the Parish Councils consideration of their or other people's complaints. The description 'unreasonably persistent' and 'vexatious' may apply separately or jointly to a particular complaint.

3.3 Examples include the way or frequency that complainants raise their complaint with staff, or how complainants respond when informed of the Parish Councils decision about the complaint.

3.4 Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint include the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the complaint and the person making it will be considered as being in this category):

- there are insufficient or no grounds for the complaint and it is made only to annoy (or for reasons that the complainant does not admit or make obvious)
- there are no specified grounds for the complaint
- the complainant refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- the complaint is about issues not within the power of the Parish Council to investigate, change or influence (examples could be a complaint about a private car park, or something that is the responsibility of another organisation) and where the complainant refuses to accept this
- the complainant insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice (insisting, for instance, that there must not be any written record of the complaint or insisting the complaint is only dealt with by the Chair)
- there appears to be groundless complaints about the staff or Councillors dealing with the complaints, and an attempt to have them dismissed or replaced
- there is an unreasonable number of contacts with the Parish Council, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or complaints
- there are persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes, telephone calls, texts, emails, etc)
- attempts to harass, verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff or Councillors dealing with their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or by the use of offensive or discriminatory language
- subsidiary or new issues are raised whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process
- trivial or irrelevant new information is introduced whilst the complaint is being investigated and an expectation that this to be taken into account and commented on
- there is a change to the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed
- the complainant denies statements they made at an earlier stage in the complaint process
- the complainant electronically records meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of others involved
- the complaint is the subject of an excessively "scattergun" approach; for instance, the complaint is not only submitted to the council, but at the same time to a Member of Parliament, other councils, elected councillors of this and other councils, the council's independent auditor, the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee, the police, solicitors, and/or the Local Government Ombudsman
- the complainant refuses to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given
- the same complaint is made repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints procedure has been concluded and where the complainant insists that the

minor differences make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure

- the complaint remains "active" through the complainant persisting in seeking an outcome which we have explained is unrealistic for legal, policy or other valid reasons
- documented evidence is not accepted as factual by the complainant
- the complaint relates to an issue based on a historic and irreversible decision or incident
- the complaint combines some or all of these features

## 4. Imposing restrictions

4.1 The Parish Council will ensure that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly according to the complaints procedure.

4.2 In the first instance the Clerk investigating the complaint will consult with their Chair or the Vice Chair in their absence, prior to issuing a warning to the complainant. The Clerk will contact the complainant either in writing or by email to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour. The Clerk will explain the actions that the Parish Council may take if the behaviour does not change.

4.3 If the disruptive behaviour continues, an extraordinary meeting will be convened to discuss the case and the complainants behaviour. The Clerk will issue a letter or email to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the Parish Council in future will be restricted. The Clerk will inform the complainant in writing of what procedures have been put in place and for what period, either in this letter or a subsequent letter. The Clerk can consult with the Monitoring Officer, HALC, SLACC or other member of the Parish Council's legal team if they so wish.

4.4 Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with the Parish Council will be appropriate and proportionate, and the complainant will be advised of the period of time the restriction will be in place for. In most cases restrictions will apply for between three and six months but in exceptional cases may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

4.5 Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the complainant and may include:

- Banning the complainant from making contact by telephone except through a third party e.g. solicitor/councillor/friend acting on their behalf
- Banning the complainant from sending emails to individual Councillors and/or all council officers and insisting they only correspond by letter
- Requiring contact to take place with the Clerk only
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days / times / duration
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Letting the complainant know that the Parish Council will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated member of staff will be identified who will read future correspondence)
- Informing the complainant that any further complaints from them will only be considered if a Clerk agrees that it warrants investigation



# OWSLEBURY & MORESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

4.6 When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a complainant, the Clerk will contact the complainant in writing to explain:

- why the Parish Council has taken the decision,
- what action the Parish Council is taking,
- the duration of that action,
- the review process of this policy, and the right of the complainant to contact the Local Government Ombudsman about the fact that their complaint has been treated as a vexatious/persistent.

4.7 The Clerk will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter to the complainant.

4.8 Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, the Clerk may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into their complaint.

4.9 Where the behaviour is so extreme, or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or Councillors, the Parish Council will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the Parish Council may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

4.10 The Parish Council does not have a legal duty to respond to those members of the public who are not Owslebury and Morestead parishioners. Owslebury Parish Council will consider this fact when receiving complaints or communications as described in policy in terms of whether they are or are not a parishioner of Owslebury and Morestead.

## **5. New complaints from complainants whose previous complaints have been treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent**

5.1 New complaints from people who have come under this policy will be treated on their merits. The Clerk will decide whether any restrictions which have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. The Parish Council does not support a 'blanket policy' of ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.

5.2 The fact that a complaint is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and any restrictions imposed on contact with the complainant will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the Parish Council.

## **6 Record keeping**

6.1 Adequate records will be retained by the Clerk along with the details of the case and the action that has been taken. This will include:

- The name and address of each customer who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent
- When the restriction comes into force and ends
- What the restrictions are
- When the customer and departments were advised

6.2 The complainant will be advised in the communication of the intention to keep the information as per GDPR Regulations.



# PRESS & MEDIA POLICY

Adopted by the Council on 9 June 2014

Reconfirmed on 18 October 2021

Reconfirmed 13 February 2023



## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities within Owslebury Parish Council (known as “the Council”) for working with the press and media (known as “the media”) and deals with the day-to-day relationship between the Council and the media.

1.2 It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The Council welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

## 2 KEYS AIMS

2.1 The Council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communications. The media – press, radio, TV, internet – are crucially important in conveying information to the community so the Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations and work with them to increase public awareness of the services and facilities provided by the Council and to explain the reasons for particular policies and priorities.

2.2 The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the local community in holding the Council to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to Officers and Councillors and to background information to assist them in this role. To balance this, the Council will defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts using other channels of communication if necessary.

## 3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. The Council must also have regard to the Government’s Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Some aspects of the Code are relevant to this policy:-

- “Any publicity describing the Council’s policies and aims [and the provision of services] should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both.”
- “Publicity touching on issues that are controversial, or on which there are arguments for and against the views or policies of the Council should be handled with particular care. Issues must be presented clearly, fairly and as simply as possible, although councils should not oversimplify facts, issues or arguments.”
- “Publicity should not attack, nor appear to undermine, generally accepted moral standards.”
- “Local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns who’s primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy.”

3.2 In particular, Officers and Councillors should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media.

3.3 Confidential documents, exempt Minutes, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and take appropriate action in accordance with the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.



3.4 When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's solicitor before any response is made.

3.5 There are a number of personal privacy issues for Officers and Councillors that must be handled carefully and sensitively in accordance with the Council's policies on Freedom of Information and Data Protection. These issues include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Councillor contact details are in the public domain), disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Parish Clerk before any response is made to the media.

## **4.0 CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA**

4.1 When responding to approaches from the media, the Chairman of the Council should be the authorised contact with the media in consultation with the Parish Clerk. However, if the subject of an enquiry relates to the work of one of the Council's Committees, the Chairman of the Council may delegate the authorised contact role to the Chairman of that Committee.

4.2 Statements made must reflect the Council's opinion.

4.3 Other Councillors can talk to the media but must ensure that it is clear that the opinions given were their own and not necessarily those of the Council.

4.4 Caution should be exercised when submitting letters to the editor for publication in newspapers. There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. However, such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks.

4.5 Letters representing the views of the Council should only be issued by the Parish Clerk following agreement by the Council or relevant Committee. If individual Councillors choose to send letters to express their own opinions on Council policies, they are strongly advised to check their facts first with the Parish Clerk. It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward are those of the Council or of an individual Councillor.

4.6 At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of the Council.

## **5 ATTENDANCE OF MEDIA AT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

5.1 Agendas and minutes of meetings will be supplied to media outlets together with dates of meetings being available on the Council's website.

5.2 The Local Government Act 1972 requires that all agendas, reports and minutes are sent to the media on request, prior to the meeting.

5.3 The media are encouraged to attend Council and Committee meetings and seating and workspace will be made available.

5.4 Filming, photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of any meeting of the Council, or a committee or subcommittee should be conducted in





accordance with the Councils protocol for reporting at meetings and should not disrupt the normal proceedings of these meetings in any way.

## **6 ELECTIONS**

6.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity contains guidance for providing publicity for Members and for publicity around elections. The code makes it clear that Council resources should not be used on publicising individual Members unless it is relevant to the particular position they hold in the Council. These extracts from the Code illustrate the main points:-

- “Publicity about individual councillors may include the contact details, the positions they hold in the council (for example, Chairman of a committee), and their responsibilities. Publicity may also include information about individual councillors’ proposals, decisions and recommendations only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the Council. All such publicity should be objective and explanatory, and personalisation of issues or personal images making should be avoided.”
- “Publicity should not be, or liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Whilst it may be appropriate to describe policies put forward by an individual councillor which are relevant to their position and responsibilities within the council, and to put forward their justification in defence of them, this should not be done in party political terms, using political slogans, expressly advocating policies of those of a particular party or directly attacking policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals.”
- “The period between the notice of an election and the election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.”

6.2 In line with practice elsewhere in the country, the Council will not quote any Councillor in a news release or involve them in proactive publicity events during the election period, regardless of whether or not they are standing for election. The only exception to this (as laid down in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity) is during an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the control of the Council. In this situation, Councillors holding key civic positions should be able to comment.

## **7 PRESS RELEASES**

7.1 The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council’s position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of all Officers and Councillors to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial.

7.2 Any Officer or Councillor may draft a press release, however they must all be issued by the Parish Clerk following agreement by the Council or relevant Committee in order to ensure that the principles outlined in section three (Legal Framework) are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.

## **8 NOTICES**

8.1 The Council website will be used to convey information on matters of interest and latest news and will be updated regularly by the Parish Clerk.



8.2 The Council notice boards will be used for the advertising of agendas, minutes and other council information.

## **9 URGENT SITUATIONS**

9.1 In the case of an urgent letter or press release being required in advance of a Council or Committee meeting, this may be issued by the Parish Clerk with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council or relevant Committee following circulation of a draft version to other Councillors for comment.

9.2 In the case of urgent actions being required in the absence of the Councillors and Officers with specific roles and responsibilities under this policy, the following delegations shall apply:

- a) the Vice Chairman of the Council may act in the absence of the Chairman;
- b) the Vice Chairman of a Committee may act in the absence of the Chairman;
- c) the Parish Clerk may act in the absence of the Vice Chairman of the Council or a Committee