

Supporting Papers

Mudford Parish Council

Governance and Resources Committee meeting

14th May 2026

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Parish Clerk/RFO

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

These Standing Orders were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on
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Chair

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1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.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

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she/they last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he/she/they considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he/she/they is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his/her/their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his/her/their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

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

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

directed by the chair of the meeting.

- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his/her/their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- j Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- k **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.**
- l **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- m **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.**
- n **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his/her/their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- o **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- p **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.**
- q **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her/their casting vote whether or not he/she/they gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the

election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

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

s 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.

- t **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a**
- **disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the**
- **Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her/their right to participate and vote on that matter.**

- u **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.

- v **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.

w **A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2.5 hours.**

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 2 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
 - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-

- committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her/their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
- ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
- iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
- iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
- v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
- ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment (unless reviewed in the last three months);
- 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 (unless reviewed in the last three months);
- 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; -DELETE?**
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

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

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee (or the sub-committee) at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not call an extraordinary meeting within 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 either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

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

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 8 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 6 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

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

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

- i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- ii. to move to a vote;
- iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
- iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee, sub-committee or the parish clerk (excluding motions which, by law, must be decided by the full Council);
- v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
- vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- viii. to require a written report;
- ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

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

policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).

- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council’s contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

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

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

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

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

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

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

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a **Upon notification by the Principal 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 3 days before the meeting confirming his/her/their withdrawal of it;
- iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her/their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

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

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial (Finance) Officer.

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 balances held at the end of the quarter being reported 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 **£30,000** 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. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer or via email (to an email address created solely for the purpose of the tender) subject to decision of the Council.
 - iv. 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 (only applies for tender submissions over £30,000);
 - v. 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 Governance and Resources Committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the Governance and Resources Committee or, if they are not available, the Chair of the Council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee at its next meeting.
- c. The Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee or in their absence, the Chair of the Council shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the

performance and annual appraisal of the work of Proper Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Governance and Resources Committee.

- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee or in their absence, the Chair of the Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of Governance and Resources Committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to the Chair or Vice-chair of the Governance and Resources Committee this shall be communicated to another member of the Committee which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Governance and Resources Committee of the Council if necessary.
- 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.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her/their personal data.**

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

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

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

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

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

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 29th May 2025.

These Financial Regulations were amended by the Council at its meeting held on 30th October 2025.

.....

Chair

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 £1,000

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/RFO 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/RFO 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 shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Clerk/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 Clerk/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 reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The Clerk/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 Clerk/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 Clerk/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 Clerk/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 Clerk/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 requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in October for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk/RFO and the Chair of the Council.
- 4.3. No later than November each year, the Clerk/RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following 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 but shall be moved to the general reserve. Unspent funds for partially completed (or delayed) projects may only be carried forward by placing them in an earmarked reserve with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. The draft budget with any committee proposals and forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.
- 4.6. Having considered the proposed budget, the council shall determine its council tax 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.
- 4.7. **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.**
- 4.8. The Clerk/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.
- 4.9. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.10. 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, including where possible, appropriate and prudent, at least one local supplier.

- 5.2. The Clerk/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 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 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £10,000 including VAT, the Clerk/RFO shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council.
- 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 £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk/RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. Where the value is between £1,000 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk/RFO shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the Clerk/RFO shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

- ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk/RFO, under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the Chair of the Council, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT.
 - the council for all items over £1,000;
- 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/RFO 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/RFO 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 (or email) shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the Clerk/RFO.

6. Banking and payments

6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the Clerk/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 and Redwood 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 Clerk/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 Clerk/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 (or authorised online) 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/RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £1000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
 - ii. payments of up to £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/RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or finance committee.
 - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £20,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 6.10. The Clerk/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 Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify 4 councillors (3 for Redwood Bank Accounts) who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next council meeting and appended to the minutes.
- 7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council 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/RFO and two authorised signatories. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

- 7.14. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Payment cards

- 8.1. Any debit or corporate credit (purchase) cards issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk/RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £2,400 unless authorised by council 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/RFO and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 8.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

9. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 9.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 9.2. **Councillors' allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. 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.
- 9.5. 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.
- 9.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will

be reviewed by the council to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

- 9.7. 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.
- 9.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

10. Loans and investments

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. 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.
- 10.3. 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.
- 10.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 10.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk/RFO.
- 10.6. 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.

11. Income

- 11.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk/RFO.
- 11.2. 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/RFO. The Clerk/RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

- 11.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the Clerk/RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 11.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the Clerk/RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 11.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 11.6. The Clerk/RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting book and that 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. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 12.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk/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.
- 12.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk/RFO 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.

13. Assets, properties and estates

- 13.1. The Clerk/RFO shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 13.2. The Clerk/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.
- 13.3. 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.
- 13.4. 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).

- 13.5. 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.

14. Insurance

- 14.1. The Clerk/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.
- 14.2. The Clerk/RFO 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.
- 14.3. The Clerk/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 Clerk/RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 14.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council.

15. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 15.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk/RFO shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 15.2. 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.
- 15.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18. d ii. 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.

Somerset City Town and Parish Councils Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct was adopted by Mudford Parish Council at its meeting held on
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Chair

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 city, 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. 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, city and 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. The Monitoring Officer will be able to advise on any matters that relate to the Code of Conduct.

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

As a councillor:

1. Respect

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.

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. 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 you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

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

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

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

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others.

However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

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

a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and

b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.

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

Examples include:

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

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

7B Consideration of advice

As a councillor:

7B.1 I will, when reaching decisions on any matter, consider and pay due regard to any relevant advice provided to me by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer in accordance with their legal requirements.

7B.2 I will give reasons for departing from the advice of the Responsible Finance Officer

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to have regard to advice from your Responsible Finance Officer where they give that advice under their statutory duties. As a councillor you must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any legal requirements and any reasonable requirements imposed by your local authority.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I will undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local County Association (SALC) or by the Monitoring Officer.

8.2 I do not make trivial or malicious complaints against other councillors.

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

8.4 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings including the complainant and any witnesses.

8.5 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 Clerk or the 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.

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 Clerk or 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 or within 28 days of your interests changing 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.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

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

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

6. 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.

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

a. your own financial interest or well-being;

b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or

c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other 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.

8. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the parish 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.

In the event that your non-registerable interest relates to -

(1) an unpaid directorship on a company owned by your authority or

(2) another local authority of which you are a member, subject to your declaring that interest, you are able to take part in any discussion and vote on the matter.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

Licenses

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.
Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer

Corporate tenancies

Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—
(a) the landlord is the council; and
(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

Securities

Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—
(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and
(b) either—
(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or

civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

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

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

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:

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

Appendix C

Guidance on Bias and Predetermination –This does not form part of the Code of Conduct

- Where you have been involved in campaigning in your political role on an issue which does not impact on your personal and/or professional life, you may participate in a decision on the issue in your political role as a councillor. However, you must not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
- The courts have sought to distinguish between situations which involve predetermination or bias on the one hand and predisposition on the other. The former is indicative of a 'closed mind' approach and likely to leave a decision susceptible to challenge by Judicial Review. Whereas being predisposed on a matter is acceptable provided you remain open to listening to all the arguments and changing your mind in light of all the information presented at the meeting.
- Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a councillor should not be regarded as having a closed mind simply because they previously did or said something that, directly or indirectly, indicated what view they might take in relation to any particular matter.
- In the circumstances, when making a decision, consider the matter with an open mind and on the facts made available to the meeting at which the decision is to be taken.

- As a councillor you will always be judged against an objective test of whether the reasonable onlooker, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would consider that you were biased. If you have predetermined your position, you should withdraw from being a member of the decision-making body for that particular matter.

Mudford Parish Council

Internal Controls Policy

1. Introduction

Mudford Parish Council, in accordance with Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of its internal control systems. This review is necessary to support the assertions made in Section 1 (point 2) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), confirming that “an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, has been maintained and reviewed.”

Given the council’s modest scale (annual income and expenditure below £200,000), this policy is proportionate to its operations and risk exposure.

2. Purpose and Scope

The aim of this policy is to outline how the council ensures the integrity of its financial and governance processes. It sets out the responsibilities and practices in place to safeguard public funds, promote compliance with legal and regulatory obligations, and ensure efficient and effective use of resources. Internal control mechanisms are intended to manage, not eliminate, risks to a reasonable level.

3. Internal Control Arrangements

- Clerk & RFO: The council employs a Clerk who also acts as the Responsible Finance (**Financial**) Officer (RFO), overseeing day-to-day financial management.
- Governing Documents: The council adopts and regularly reviews key governance documents, including its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and a Members’ Code of Conduct.
- Risk Management: An annual Financial and Management Risk Assessment is conducted and approved by the council. The council also reviews its Asset Register annually for accuracy and completeness.
- Audit:
 - An internal audit is carried out annually by an independent auditor.
 - The external audit is conducted by PKF Littlejohn LLP.
- Financial Safeguards:
 - **A nominated councillor checks the accounting statement (system) against invoices and payments at least six times a year and not exceeding a three-month interval.**

- Two councillors review all invoices prior to payment.
- Two councillors authorise all payments. Councillors receive invoices by email prior to all bank payment authorisations. Payments authorised under the delegated authority of the Clerk/RFO are presented at the next ordinary meeting and checked against invoices by two councillors. The List of Payments ready for authorization is checked against invoices and signed by two councillors at each council meeting.
- One councillor independently reviews and signs off the Clerk's payroll.
- Payroll is processed by an external payroll company to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- Monthly bank reconciliations are reviewed by the council during council's ordinary meetings.
- Financial records are maintained using appropriate systems (Scribe Accounts).
- Budget Monitoring:
 - A budget is prepared annually and approved by full council in January.
 - Regular budget monitoring reports are presented to council as part of the agenda document.
- Payroll and VAT:
 - The RFO ensures timely payroll submissions, PAYE compliance, and VAT returns submitted at least once a year.
- Grants:
 - Any grants issued by the council are recorded and monitored according to set policies.
- Document Control:
 - All council minutes are sequentially numbered and securely stored.
 - Key documents are safely retained. **The council follows its document retention procedure.**
- Register of Interests:
 - A Register of Members' Interests is maintained, and declarations of gifts and hospitality are recorded.

4. Internal Audit Terms of Reference

The internal audit will assess the council's financial controls and overall governance in line with the "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide".

- The internal auditor must be independent, with no involvement in the council's financial administration or decision-making.
- The council provides the internal auditor with access to all required records and staff.

- A written report is submitted following the audit, highlighting any issues and recommendations for council action.
- Any additional audit work (beyond the standard review) must be approved by the council and agreed with the auditor in advance.

5. Responsibilities

The full council is collectively responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. The Clerk/RFO supports implementation and ensures timely and accurate reporting of financial matters.

The Clerk/RFO prepares an Internal Control Report for each financial year, following the internal audit.

6. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it remains up to date with statutory requirements and best practices.

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Chair

**MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These Terms of Reference were adopted by the council at its meeting held on XXX.

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Chair

Constitution and purpose

The Governance and Resources Committee is constituted as a Standing Committee of Mudford Parish Council and authorised by the council to manage any activity within its Terms of Reference.

The Governance and Resources Committee shall have responsibility for oversight of the council’s governance framework, resources, staffing and policy compliance.

The committee shall operate within the legal framework set by statute, national guidance and council policy, and support the operational independence of the Parish Clerk.

Membership and quorum

1. The committee shall comprise of four members, including at least three councillors, one of whom shall be appointed as the chair of the committee by the full council.
2. A quorum shall consist of three committee members, all of whom must be councillors.
3. Non-councillors may be appointed as members of the committee but shall not have voting rights.
4. Members shall be appointed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
5. All members must observe Code of Conduct.

Meetings

1. The committee will meet as necessary and at least twice a year. The Standing Orders apply to all meetings.
2. All meetings will have an agenda and minutes will be taken and be presented for approval at the next committee meeting.

3. All meetings should be open to the public, although the public and press may be excluded when sensitive matters are under discussion.
4. The Parish Clerk should attend and prepare agenda and minutes for meetings.

Scope of Governance

1. To promote understanding and observance of the council's Code of Conduct, with a view to ensuring that all interactions between members of the council, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, members of the public and any other people with whom contact is made are conducted with respect and courtesy.
2. To ensure that the council has policies and procedures in place to meet its human resources and health and safety and all other statutory responsibilities.
3. To conduct an annual review of the council's Code of Conduct, human resources, health and safety, finance, cemetery and other policies and procedures and recommend amendments and additions to the full council in advance of the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
4. To oversee corporate governance arrangements, including internal controls, risk management and audit responses.
5. To respond to consultative document from Government and other bodies.
6. To ensure that health and safety, data protection legislation and best practice are adhered to across the council's function.

Scope of Resources

1. To provide strategic oversight of the council's staffing structure, training programmes and human resource needs.
2. To support the Parish Clerk in ensuring the effective recruitment, retention, and development of staff to meet the council's objectives.
3. To receive reports and recommendations from the Parish Clerk on staffing matters, including regrading, pay levels and structural changes. Recruitment to all roles below the Parish Clerk, where no changes to the job description are proposed, will be undertaken by the Parish Clerk with members of the committee sitting on the interview panel.
4. To decide, with the Parish Clerk and any other staff concerned, any issues relating to staffing levels and re-grading, pay levels and staffing structures.
5. To monitor Parish Clerk's and councillor training programmes and their respective budgets.
6. To manage the recruitment of Parish Clerk and/or RFO, including the preparation of job descriptions, person specifications, job evaluations, remuneration levels and employee contracts, shortlisting and organising interviews, and making recommendations to the full council.

7. To conduct the Parish Clerk annual appraisal, set performance objectives, and support professional development.
8. To manage Parish Clerk's sickness absence and leave requests.
9. To oversee the dismissal process of Parish Clerk.
10. To make recommendations to the council concerning any changes to the salary, hours of work and pension arrangements of Parish Clerk.
11. To appraise the performance of the Parish Clerk. The appraisal of any additional Parish Council employees will be carried out by the Parish Clerk.
12. To comply with and have due regard to existing policies relating to staffing matters which include (but are not limited to): i. Standing Orders ii. Financial Regulations. iii. Job Descriptions and National Joint Council (NJC) contracts. iv. ACAS guidelines and procedures for grievances or disciplinary matters v. Implementing NJC changes as notified by SALC.
13. To act as point of contact for formal complaints made by or against the Parish Clerk. To follow up complaints relating to staff and undertake disciplinary and grievance procedures, as necessary, and report back to the full council.
14. The Governance and Resources Committee may appoint a sub-committee with its own Terms of Reference and membership, as agreed by the committee. The committee may delegate authority to the sub-committee to deal with specified matters. Meetings of the sub-committee will not be open to the public.

Reporting

The Chairman of the Committee shall report back to the full council with recommendations.

Review

Annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Scheme of Delegation

This Scheme of Delegation was adopted at the meeting of Mudford Parish Council held on XXX

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Chair

This Scheme will be reviewed annually by full council, or when there are changes to legislation, whichever is the sooner.

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer (**Parish Clerk**) and Responsible Finance Officer and Standing Committees of Mudford Parish Council (the council) to act with delegated authority in specific circumstances.

1. Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer - duties and powers

1.2 Responsible Finance Officer

The parish clerk shall be the responsible finance officer to the council and shall be responsible for the council's accounting procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time (including Financial Regulations).

2. Proper Officer

2.1 The parish clerk shall be the proper officer of the council and as such is specifically authorised to:

- receive declarations of acceptance of office;
- receive and record notices from councillors disclosing interests;
- receive and retain plans and documents;
- facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
- sign notices or other documents on behalf of the council;
- receive copies of by-laws and other statutory provisions made by Somerset Council;
- certify copies of by-laws made by the council;
- sign and issue summonses to attend meetings of the council;
- sign binding contracts on behalf of the council in accordance with the Standing Orders;
- give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);

- convene a meeting of the council for the election of a new chairman of the council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in that office;

2.2 In addition, the parish clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the council:

- the day-to-day administration of council services, together with routine inspection and control;
- authorisation of an expenditure up to £500 within the agreed budget;
- expenditure of up to £1,000 as per council's Financial Regulations in consultation with the chair of the council;
- expenditure 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 (whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure);
- authorise the making of payments and transactions on behalf of council in line with the council's Financial Regulations;
- authorise the procurement of services and enter into contracts for the execution of works or supply of equipment as authorised by the council or its committees and in line with council's Financial Regulations;
- undertake the Annual Accounting Governance and Statement process with the internal and external auditor and the council;
- as council's Health and Safety Officer take such action as is necessary to ensure the safety and security of council's properties and those who use them, and
- to take such action as is necessary to fulfil their duties, as governed by council's Standing Orders.

2.3 Planning applications shall be received by the parish clerk who will provide details to councillors. Where no queries arise by joint decision of all councillors, the parish clerk shall be delegated to inform the Planning Department within the time allocated of the decision of the council. All councillors will report directly back to the parish clerk thereby avoiding discussion between members. Where queries arise the chairman will call for a site meeting which may require an Extraordinary Meeting to decide upon the application or for the clerk to ask the Planning Department for an extension on the deadline for comments.

2.4 The parish clerk is authorised to manage routine cemetery matters on behalf of the council. This includes the administration of burial and memorial applications, the sale and documentation of Exclusive Rights of Burial (EROB), scheduling of maintenance works, and liaison with funeral directors and stonemasons. The parish clerk is also responsible for maintaining accurate burial and EROB records, responding to public enquiries, and ensuring compliance with cemetery regulations. Any non-routine, contentious, or policy-related matters will be referred to the full council or the appropriate committee for consideration.

2.5 The parish clerk is authorised to approve and arrange additional cuts of grass in the Recreation Grounds and the Cemetery as necessary to maintain standards and respond to seasonal or community needs.

2.6 Delegated actions of the parish clerk shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the council from time to time.

3. Parish Council

3.1 The following matters are reserved to full council for decision, notwithstanding that the appropriate committee(s) may make recommendations thereon for the council's consideration:

- setting the precept;
- approving the annual budget;
- borrowing money;
- power of incurring capital expenditure not specifically included in the council's approved estimate of expenditure for the current budget;
- making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or this Scheme of Delegation including delegations to committees and/or officers;
- making, amending or revoking by-laws;
- making of orders under any statutory powers;
- decide matters of principle or policy;
- nomination and appointment of representatives of the council to any other authority,
- organisation or body (excepting approved conferences or meetings);
- any proposed new undertakings;
- prosecution or defence in a court of law;
- nomination or appointment of representatives of the council at any inquiry on matters affecting Mudford Parish, excluding those matters specific to a committee;
- approving the annual return;
- review and confirm council's eligibility to exercise the General Power of Competence (as required due to councillor and/or parish clerk changes);
- to set dates of meetings of the council and its committees;
- to oversee the conduct of the council and the committees endeavouring to act in the best interests of all residents;
- receipt of reports to the council from various committees, sub-committees and working parties;
- to authorise the sealing of various documents with the Common Seal;
- consideration of new and reviews of consultation and policy documents of other bodies and any other consultation documents not appropriate for delegating to committees;
- the appointment and dismissal of the Parish Clerk/RFO role;
- any other matters not delegated to a committee, sub-committee or project steering group or working party or referred to the council by a committee, sub-committee, or project steering group or working party;
- matters of strategic growth within the parish; and
- disposal of assets with a value of over £500.00 and all interests in land.

4. Standing Committees

Mudford Parish Council has appointed a Governance and Resources Committee to undertake work for and on behalf of the council. The specific responsibilities of the committee are confirmed by Terms of Reference appended to this scheme confirming membership and number of seats, frequency of meetings, remit of the committee and reporting structure, and delegated authority.

All committees are subject to the following principles:

- delegated powers are exercised in accordance with any policy or direction given by council;
- delegated powers are subject to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
- any unresolved differences between committees shall be referred to full council for determination;
- committees will refer to council any matters being pursued by other local authority/statutory/voluntary or other bodies which have a beneficial or detrimental effect on the area of Mudford.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Constitution and purpose

The Governance and Resources Committee is constituted as a Standing Committee of Mudford Parish Council and authorised by the council to manage any activity within its Terms of Reference.

The Governance and Resources Committee shall have responsibility for oversight of the council's governance framework, resources, staffing and policy compliance. The committee shall operate within the legal framework set by statute, national guidance and council policy, and support the operational independence of the Parish Clerk.

Membership and quorum

1. The committee shall comprise of four members, including at least three councillors, one of whom shall be appointed as the chair of the committee by the full council.
2. A quorum shall consist of three committee members, all of whom must be councillors.
3. Non-councillors may be appointed as members of the committee but shall not have voting rights.
4. Members shall be appointed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
5. All members must observe Code of Conduct.

Meetings

1. The committee will meet as necessary and at least twice a year. The Standing Orders apply to all meetings.
2. All meetings will have an agenda and minutes will be taken and be presented for approval at the next committee meeting.
3. All meetings should be open to the public, although the public and press may be excluded when sensitive matters are under discussion.
4. The Parish Clerk should attend and prepare agenda and minutes for meetings.

Scope of Governance

1. To promote understanding and observance of the council's Code of Conduct, with a view to ensuring that all interactions between members of the council, officers, employees, volunteers, contractors, members of the public and any other people with whom contact is made are conducted with respect and courtesy.
2. To ensure that the council has policies and procedures in place to meet its human resources and health and safety and all other statutory responsibilities.
3. To conduct an annual review of the council's Code of Conduct, human resources, health and safety, finance, cemetery and other policies and procedures and recommend amendments and additions to the full council in advance of the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
4. To oversee corporate governance arrangements, including internal controls, risk management and audit responses.
5. To respond to consultative document from Government and other bodies.
6. To ensure that health and safety, data protection legislation and best practice are adhered to across the council's function.

Scope of Resources

1. To provide strategic oversight of the council's staffing structure, training programmes and human resource needs.
2. To support the Parish Clerk in ensuring the effective recruitment, retention, and development of staff to meet the council's objectives.
3. To receive reports and recommendations from the Parish Clerk on staffing matters, including regrading, pay levels and structural changes. Recruitment to all roles below the Parish Clerk, where no changes to the job description are proposed, will be undertaken by the Parish Clerk with members of the committee sitting on the interview panel.
4. To decide, with the Parish Clerk and any other staff concerned, any issues relating to staffing levels and re-grading, pay levels and staffing structures.
5. To monitor Parish Clerk's and councillor training programmes and their respective budgets.

6. To manage the recruitment of Parish Clerk and/or RFO, including the preparation of job descriptions, person specifications, job evaluations, remuneration levels and employee contracts, shortlisting and organising interviews, and making recommendations to the full council.
7. To conduct the Parish Clerk annual appraisal, set performance objectives, and support professional development.
8. To manage Parish Clerk's sickness absence and leave requests.
9. To oversee the dismissal process of Parish Clerk.
10. To make recommendations to the council concerning any changes to the salary, hours of work and pension arrangements of Parish Clerk.
11. To appraise the performance of the Parish Clerk. The appraisal of any additional Parish Council employees will be carried out by the Parish Clerk.
12. To comply with and have due regard to existing policies relating to staffing matters which include (but are not limited to): i. Standing Orders ii. Financial Regulations. iii. Job Descriptions and National Joint Council (NJC) contracts. iv. ACAS guidelines and procedures for grievances or disciplinary matters v. Implementing NJC changes as notified by SALC.
13. To act as point of contact for formal complaints made by or against the Parish Clerk. To follow up complaints relating to staff and undertake disciplinary and grievance procedures, as necessary, and report back to the full council.
14. The Governance and Resources Committee may appoint a sub-committee with its own Terms of Reference and membership, as agreed by the committee. The committee may delegate authority to the sub-committee to deal with specified matters. Meetings of the sub-committee will not be open to the public.

Reporting

The Chairman of the Committee shall report back to the full council with recommendations.

Review

Annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS POLICY

This Complaints Policy was adopted by Mudford Parish Council at its meeting held on XXX

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Chair

1. Introduction

1.1 Mudford Parish Council ('the Council') is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Council, this policy document sets out how you may complain and how the Council will try and resolve your complaint.

1.2 Complaints received from members of the public about the administration or procedures of the Council are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman. There are few remedies available, aside from the four-yearly election cycle where Councillors may not be re-elected if the public are unhappy with the representation that they have had. The Government has taken the view that town and parish councils are accountable to their electorate, principally, through the ballot box.

1.3 However, in the interests of transparency and accountability the Council has adopted a formal procedure for considering complaints.

1.4 It is essential that complaints are dealt with positively. The Council is anxious to hear people's comments and committed to making full use of complaints information to contribute to continuous service improvement.

1.5 The Council's Complaints Policy covers the following three areas of complaint:

- a. Complaints about a Council service or function.
- b. Complaints about a member of staff.
- c. Complaints about a Councillor.

1.6 The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by

writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

1.7 Additionally, every elector has the right to raise any matter affecting parish business at the Annual Parish Meeting. Members of the public are also able to come along and ask questions or raise issues during public question time at the start of every meeting of the Council and its constituent committee.

2. Definition of a complaint

A complaint is defined as 'any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the Council, Councillors or staff, which affects an individual or group of individuals'.

3. What the Complaints Policy will deal with

The policy will deal with:

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

4. What the Complaints Policy will not deal with

The policy will not deal with:

- complaints for which there is a legal remedy or where legal proceedings already exists;
- complaints about employment matters; these will be dealt with by the Council's internal grievance procedure;
- complaints about an incident or matter which took place more than 12 months before a complaint is lodged.

5. The Parish Council's Complaints Procedure does not apply to

- complaints by one employee against another employee, or between an employee and the Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- complaints against Councillors. Such complaints will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct for Members, adopted by the Council at any given time. If a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council for investigation. Further

information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council.

6. Equal Opportunities

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

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

7. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

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

8. Informal Complaints

8.1 During the course of daily business, minor complaints may be made to officers regarding the service the Council provides. The appropriate officer or Clerk will usually deal with these. It is not appropriate for every comment received to be treated as a formal complaint. Every effort should be made to deal with these problems immediately, either by providing information, instigating appropriate action or explaining a decision.

9. Formal Complaints

The procedure for handling formal complaints is set out below:

Stage 1

9.1 A complainant may notify a complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk (as the Proper Officer of the Council). This will be recorded as a complaint and passed to the appropriate person to investigate. An acknowledgement will be sent within 2 working days.

9.2 If a complainant indicates that he/she would prefer not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk then he/she should be advised to put it to the Chair of the Council. An acknowledgement will be sent within 2 working days.

Stage 2

9.3 The Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Council, will endeavour to settle the complaint directly with the complainant within 14 working days of receipt of thereof, but shall not do so without first notifying any person who is the subject of the complaint, providing an opportunity to comment.

9.4 If the investigation of the complaint is likely to take more than 14 working days, the complainant will be notified together with a reason for the extended investigation period.

9.5 Where the Parish Clerk receives a written complaint about his/her own actions, he/she shall immediately refer the complaint to the Chair of the Council.

Stage 3

9.6 The formal response to the complaint must also advise the complainant that, if having received a full response to the complaint, the issue remains unresolved, the complainant has the right to request, within 7 days, that the matter be referred to:

- a) the Committee responsible for the service or function for the next available meeting; or
- b) the Governance and Resources (G&R) Committee, in the case of a member of staff, at the next available meeting.

9.7 A decision made by (a) or (b) above shall be considered final and the complaint considered closed.

9.8 If the complainant does not make such a request within 7 working days, the complaint is considered closed.

Stage 4

9.9 If the complainant responds and requests the matter to be referred to the relevant committee, as detailed above, the Parish Clerk shall consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and the public. If the matter is such that the Council or the Parish Clerk believes that the matter may lead to a disciplinary hearing then the matter must be heard with the press and public excluded.

9.10 If the complaint is against any employee, even if the matter is being dealt with initially out of the act as set out in the Employment Relations Act 1999 s.10. The matter before the Council in this case will be to establish whether there is a factual basis to the complaint and the action that should then be taken. The proceedings at this stage cannot be a formal disciplinary hearing, which must be convened on a separate occasion in the proper manner.

9.11 If the complaint is against any elected member, which cannot be resolved at a local level, this will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council.

Stage 5

9.12 The complainant will be notified, in writing, of the final decision within 14 working days of the meeting of the relevant committee.

10. Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

10.1 In the event of repeated vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the Council will consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to

the complainant. If new evidence is provided, it will be evaluated in case the subject matter is sufficiently different from any previous vexatious or malicious complaint as to justify consideration as a new complaint.

11. Anonymous Complaints

11.1 Anonymous complaints should be referred to the Parish Clerk and may be acted on at his/her discretion, according to the type and seriousness of the allegation.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Communications Policy

Introduction

Mudford Parish Council (MPC) articulates and represents the views and needs of the local community. It provides information on important parish matters affecting the community and encourages comment from interested individuals and groups. The overall aim is to make council communications a two-way process: to give people the information to understand accurately what MPC does, whilst also enabling MPC to make informed decisions using information received from residents and partners. The principles of these guidelines apply to all parish councillors and the clerk to MPC. It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the parish council.

The Importance of Good Communication

Good communications will enable MPC to:

- better understand the needs of the community and develop appropriate strategies and priorities;
- raise residents' satisfaction, trust and confidence by communicating about issues, services and opportunities in the parish;
- be an effective voice of the community;
- make best use of technology to innovate and engage with hard-to-reach groups;
- proactively challenge inaccuracies and misrepresentations that might undermine the image or integrity of MPC or the parish.

1. Parish Council Correspondence

- (i) All correspondence relating to Mudford Parish Council should be addressed to the clerk (**Proper Officer of the council**) in the first instance either via email at clerk@mudford-pc.gov.uk or via post. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practically possible.
- (ii) Although all councillors have their own MPC email addresses name.surname@mudford-pc.gov.uk, the clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on anything relevant to councillors or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the council will usually come from the clerk. In instances where this is not the case, the clerk should be copied in.

2. Agenda Items for Council and Committee meetings

- (i) Agenda should be clear and concise. It should contain sufficient information to enable councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
- (ii) Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
- (iii) Where the clerk or a councillor wishes fellow councillors to receive matters for “information only”, this information will be circulated via the clerk.

3. Communications with the Press and Public

- (i) The clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the chairman of the council or the chairman of the relevant committee.
- (ii) Press reports from the council, its committees or working parties should be from the clerk or via the reporter’s own attendance at a meeting.
- (iii) Unless a councillor has been authorised by the council to speak to the media on a particular issue, councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.
- (iv) Unless a councillor is reporting the view of the council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- (v) If councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the council’s adopted complaints procedure.

4. Councillor Correspondence to external parties

- (i) As the clerk should be sending most of the council’s correspondence from a councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the council.
- (ii) A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a councillor’s role within it, should be sent to the clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. “copy to the clerk” so that the recipient is aware that the clerk has been advised.

It is important to note that any emails sent to MPC email addresses will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act requirements. The clerk will acknowledge all Freedom of Information requests within seven working days and will reply fully within 20 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, a further holding letter/email will be sent with an expected completion date.

Mudford Parish Council is the Data Controller as defined by GDPR of personal data processed by the Council and Councillors. The Data Protection **lead** is the clerk.

5. Communications with Parish Council Staff

- (i) Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, councillors sitting as a committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).
- (ii) No individual councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the chairman of the council, the chairman of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to the clerk which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- (iii) Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the council.
- (iv) Emails:
 - Instant replies should not be expected from the clerk and reasons for urgency should be stated.
 - The councillors will receive the summons and all other relevant correspondence at their MPC email address: name.surname@mudford-pc.gov.uk unless their agreement is withdrawn.
- (vi) Meetings with the clerk:
 - Wherever possible an appointment should be made and meetings should be relevant to the work of the clerk.
 - Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.

This policy has been adopted by Mudford Parish Council at the meeting held
XXXX

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Chair

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Mudford Parish Council:

“Mudford Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its members; staff; volunteers; visitors; and for anyone affected by its activities.

The Council maintains this policy for the management of health and safety as its top priority and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure effective organisation and planning are established and maintained. The Council will also ensure that appropriate and effective audit and review mechanisms are used to inform the work of the Council, which undertakes to commit appropriate resources to manage health and safety.”

Mudford Parish Council’s statement of general policy, below, is based upon that required by virtue of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Although the Council has a single employee, the principles of the Act and its underpinning Regulations as later published are taken by the Council as a minimum requirement for the safe and effective management of the Council and its activities.

Mudford Parish Council’s statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities.
- To consult with our staff on matters affecting their health and safety.
- To provide and maintain safe equipment.
- To provide sufficient information, instruction, and supervision of staff, volunteers and visitors as far as is reasonably practicable.
- To ensure all staff and volunteers are competent in their Council-related activities, and to provide adequate training as far as is reasonably practicable.
- To prevent accidents and activity-related ill health as far as is reasonably practicable.
- To maintain safe and healthy conditions for conducting the Council’s business and the public facilities it provides.
- To review and revise this Policy as necessary at regular intervals, but at least annually.

The Council’s Safety Officer is the Parish Clerk. Their responsibility is:

- a) To oversee, implement and monitor the policy.
- b) The preparation of risk assessments.
- c) The provision of information, instruction, supervision and training in relation to their specific areas of expertise.
- d) The investigation of accidents and incidents and maintenance of safety records.
- e) When an accident or hazardous incident occurs, take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.
- f) Act as the contact and liaison point for the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

Reporting of accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences:

The Safety Officer will be responsible for reporting of accidents. The current regulations governing the notification and recording of accidents are the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. These regulations require that certain prescribed events, injuries and diseases be formally reported.

In the event of an accident resulting in injury, a report will be drawn up by the Safety Officer detailing:

- The circumstances of the accident including photographs and diagrams wherever possible.
- The nature and severity of the injury sustained.
- The identity of any eyewitnesses.
- The time, date and location of the incident.
- The date of the report.

All eyewitness accounts will be collected as near to the time of the accident as is reasonably practicable.

Safety Officer - contact details:

Petra Galloway
+447552 509707
Email: clerk@mudford-pc.gov.uk

This Policy Statement was adopted by Mudford Parish Council at its meeting held on XXX.

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Chair

**Mudford Parish Council
Publication Scheme**

This scheme was adopted by the Council on

XXX

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost (* see p7)
Class1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only.	Note: Mudford Parish Council Website: www.mudford-pc.gov.uk	
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website & Clerk	
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website & Clerk	(see p6)
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	N/A – the council does not have an office	
Staffing structure	Website & Clerk	
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum		
Annual return form and report by Auditor	Website & Clerk	
Finalised budget	Website & Clerk	
Precept	Website & Clerk	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website & Clerk	
Grants given and received	Website & Clerk	
Bank Reconciliations	Website & Clerk	
List of payments	Website & Clerk	
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Clerk	
Members' allowances and expenses	N/A	

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current and previous year as a minimum		
Parish Plan	N/A	
Annual Report to Parish Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website & Clerk	
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/sub-committee meetings)	Website & Clerk	
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website & Notice Boards	(# see p6)
Minutes of meetings (as above) – n.b. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website & Clerk	
Reports presented to council meetings – n.b. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website & Clerk	
Responses to consultation papers	Hard copy	20p/sheet
Responses to planning applications (Council minutes/Somerset Council's website)	Website & Clerk	
Bye-laws	N/A	

<p>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>		
<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: Standing Orders (procedural) Code of Conduct Financial Regulations Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Scheme Internal Control's Policy</p>	<p>Website & Clerk</p>	
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services Equality and Diversity policy Health and Safety policy Biodiversity Policy Recruitment policies (including current vacancies) Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme) Data Policies and Notices</p>	<p>Website & Clerk</p>	

Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	Clerk	
Assets Register	Website & Clerk	
Register of members' interests	Somerset Council Website & Clerk	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Clerk	
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only		
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Website & Clerk	
Community centres and village halls	N/A	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Clerk	
Play area, skate park and outdoor gym - annual inspections	Website & Clerk	
Arboriculturist surveys	Website & Clerk	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Clerk	
Markets	N/A	
Public conveniences	N/A	
Agency agreements	N/A	
Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Website & Clerk	
Allotments	N/A	

Contact details:

Email: clerk@mudford-pc.gov.uk

Exempt Material:

Personal information relating to Councillors (other than required to be declared in the Members' Register of Interests).
Personal Information relating to employees.
Tenders and bids from contractors and suppliers.

Note: Data Protection Legislation prohibits the publication of certain categories of information.

Notice boards:

Mudford Village Hall car park – full agenda

Hales Meadow - entrance to the Recreation Ground – meetings' notices only (lack of space)

Tor View Close – meetings' notices only (lack of space)

Charging Policy

Information can be inspected by arrangement with the Clerk, free of charge. There is no Parish Office so the information requested will be made available at the next parish council meeting. If this is impracticable for any reason, then copies of the documents will be sent by post. There is unlikely to be any further charge other than printing and second-class Royal Mail postage, but the Parish Council reserve the right to do so to reimburse the cost of the Clerk's time. Applicants will be informed if there is an intention to charge.

Information, which can be photocopied, without breaching copyright laws, can be copied by the Clerk at a cost of 20p per single sided A4 sheet (25p per colour single sided A4 sheet).

* SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying 20p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost 20p
	Photocopying 25p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost 25p
	Postage	Actual Royal Mail cost
Other	A search of archived records (for example pre-1994 Council Minutes)	£50 per Search
	Copies of documents held at the Library	Actual Library charge

Mudford Parish Council

Accessibility Statement

This Statement was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on XXX

This statement applies to content published on the <https://mudford-pc.gov.uk> domain.

This website is run by Parish Online Websites on behalf of Mudford Parish Council. It is designed to be used by as many people as possible. The text should be clear and simple to understand. You should be able to:

- zoom in up to 300% without problems;
- navigate most of the website using just a keyboard;
- navigate most of the website using speech recognition software;
- use most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver).

How accessible this website is

Parts of this website are not fully accessible. For example:

- some pages and document attachments are not written in plain English;
- some tables do not have row headings;
- some documents have poor colour contrast;
- some heading elements are not consistent;
- some images do not have image descriptions;
- many documents are in PDF format and are not accessible;

Mudford Parish Council continue to strive to improve the content accessibility.

Feedback and contact information

Tell us if you need information in a different format. There's a feedback form at the bottom of each page.

In your message, include:

- the web address (URL) of the content;
- your email address and name;

- how you'd like to receive the information.

Mudford Parish Council will then endeavour to improve the website to cater to this need. However, changes cannot be guaranteed.

Reporting accessibility problems with this website

If you find any problems that are not listed on this page or you think we're not meeting the accessibility requirements, please fill in the feedback form at the bottom of the page.

Enforcement procedure

If you contact us with a complaint and you're not happy with our response contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations').

Technical information about this website's accessibility

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

Compliance status

This website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA standard.

How we tested this website

The website is regularly tested on each version release using WCAG 2.2 AA compliance tools, including Lighthouse and Axe.

System tools are used to simulate users with visual impairments and dyslexia to inform design decision-making.

Internal reports are produced for each screen demonstrating compliance.

What we are doing to improve accessibility

Improvements to the site accessibility is an ongoing process. Regular updates will be made to the site to ensure it's at the highest practical level of accessibility.

Mudford Parish Council

Data Protection Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

Mudford Parish Council is committed to protecting personal data and being transparent about how it collects, uses and safeguards information. This policy sets out how the council complies with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

This policy applies to all personal data processed by the council, including data relating to:

- Employees, former employees and job applicants
- Councillors and former councillors
- Contractors, consultants and volunteers
- Parishioners, residents and members of the public
- Suppliers and representatives of partner organisations

Together these individuals are referred to as *data subjects*.

The Parish Clerk is the Council's Data Protection Lead and is responsible for compliance. All queries and requests should be directed to the Clerk.

2. Definitions

"Personal data" is any information that relates to a living person who can be identified from that data (a 'data subject') on its own, or when taken together with other information. It includes both automated personal data and manual filing systems where personal data are accessible according to specific criteria. It does not include anonymised data.

"Processing" is any use that is made of data, including collecting, recording, organising, consulting, storing, amending, disclosing or destroying it.

"Special categories of personal data" means information about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation and genetic or biometric data as well as criminal convictions and offences.

"Criminal records data" means information about an individual's criminal convictions and offences, and information relating to criminal allegations and proceedings.

3. Data Protection Principles

All personal data is processed in accordance with the relevant data protection principles. The council will ensure data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- Accurate and kept up to date
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed securely using appropriate technical and organisational measures

Mudford Parish Council has also adopted a Privacy Policy for Website Users and a Privacy Notice (Mudford Cemetery), which operate alongside this policy and provide additional information.

4. Lawful Bases for Processing

The Council will only process personal data where a lawful basis applies, including:

- Consent (where required)
- Performance of a contract (e.g. employment or services)
- Compliance with a legal obligation
- Performance of a task carried out in the public interest or official authority
- Legitimate interests (where these are not overridden by individual rights)
- Protection of vital interests

Where consent is relied upon, it may be withdrawn at any time.

Personal data related to council employees:

Sometimes the council will share employee personal data with contractors and agents to carry out its obligations under a contract with the individual or for its legitimate interests. The council requires those individuals or companies to keep personal data confidential and secure, and to protect it in accordance with data protection law and council policies. They are only permitted to process that data for the lawful purpose for which it has been shared and in accordance with the council's instructions.

The council will update HR-related personal data promptly if advised that employee information has changed or is inaccurate. The employee may be required to provide documentary evidence in some circumstances.

The council keeps a record of its processing activities in respect of HR-related personal data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

5. Special Category and Criminal Records Data

Special category and criminal records data will only be processed where permitted by law, including for employment obligations, safeguarding, legal claims, public interest functions, or where explicit consent has been given.

6. Individual Rights

All data subjects have rights under data protection law, including the right to:

- Be informed about how their data is used
- Access their personal data (subject access request)
- Rectify inaccurate or incomplete data
- Request erasure of data where applicable
- Restrict or object to processing in certain circumstances
- Complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Subject access requests and rights requests should be made in writing to the Parish Clerk. Proof of identity may be required. The council has adopted a Subject Access Request Policy, which provides further information.

7. Information Security and Retention

The council has a duty to keep personal data secure. Appropriate technical and organisational measures are in place to protect data against unauthorised access, loss or disclosure.

Personal data will only be retained for as long as necessary for the purpose for which it was collected, in line with retention schedules. Data will be securely destroyed when no longer required.

8. Data Sharing and Contractors

Where necessary, personal data may be shared with contractors or service providers. All third parties are required to:

- Act only on the Council's instructions
- Keep data confidential and secure
- Comply with data protection legislation

Personal data is not sold or shared for marketing purposes.

9. Data Breaches

The council adopted a Data Breach Policy. All data breaches must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk. The council will record all breaches and, where required, notify the ICO within 72 hours and affected individuals without undue delay.

10. International Transfers

The Council does not routinely transfer personal data outside the UK or EU. Any such transfer will only take place in accordance with the law and with appropriate safeguards.

11. Responsibilities

Everyone working for or on behalf of the council has a responsibility to protect personal data. Individuals must:

- access only data that they have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the council) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure (for example by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, including password protection, locking computer screens when away from desk, and secure file storage and destruction including locking drawers and cabinets, not leaving documents on desk whilst unattended);
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the council's premises without prior authorisation and without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device; and
- to never transfer personal data outside the European Economic Area except in compliance with the law and with express authorisation from the Clerk or Chair of the Council
- to ask for help from the council's data protection lead if unsure about data protection or if you notice a potential breach or any areas of data protection or security that can be improved upon.

Council employees are responsible for keeping their personal data up to date. They should let the council know if data provided to the council changes, for example if they move to a new house or change their bank details.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

12. Complaints

If you have concerns about how your personal data has been handled, you should contact:

Parish Clerk / Data Protection Lead

Email: clerk@mudford-pc.gov.uk

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Freedom of Information Policy

This Freedom of Information Policy was adopted by Mudford Parish Council at its meeting held XXX

Model Publication Scheme - Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

Mudford Parish Council adopted a separate Publication Scheme document that has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This policy and the Publication Scheme commit an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

This policy and the Publication Scheme commit an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language

that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

The purpose of **this Policy and the Publication Scheme** is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

MUDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Privacy Policy for Website Users

This Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on XXX

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Chair

Our privacy policy describes how we gather, use and manage personal data as a visitor to this website. The Council also adopted [a general data Protection Policy](#).

This privacy policy applies to you, the User of this Website, and Mudford Parish Council, the owner and provider of this Website. Mudford Parish Council takes the privacy of your information very seriously. This privacy policy applies to our use of any and all Data collected by us or provided by you in relation to your use of the Website.

Definitions and Interpretation

In this privacy policy, the following definitions are used:

- **Data**

Collectively all information that you submit to Mudford Parish Council via the Website. This definition incorporates, where applicable, the definitions provided in the Data Protection Laws.

- **Cookies**

A small text file placed on your computer by this Website when you visit certain parts of the Website and/or when you use certain features of the Website. Details of the cookies used by this Website are set out in the clause below (Cookies).

- **Data Protection Laws**

Any applicable law relating to the processing of personal Data, including but not limited to the GDPR, and any national implementing and supplementary laws, regulations and secondary legislation; GDPR. The UK General Data Protection Regulation; Mudford Parish Council (we or us). An organisation incorporated in England and Wales. UK and EU Cookie Law. The Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 as amended by the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 & the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

- **User or you**

Any third party that accesses the Website and is not either (i) employed by Mudford Parish Council and acting in the course of their employment or (ii) engaged as a consultant or otherwise providing services to Mudford Parish Council and accessing the Website in connection with the provision of such services; and Website. The website that you are currently using, <https://mudford-pc.gov.uk>, and any sub-domains of this site unless expressly excluded by their own terms and conditions.

In this privacy policy, unless the context requires a different interpretation:

- a) the singular includes the plural and vice versa;
- b) references to sub-clauses, clauses, schedules or appendices are to sub-clauses, clauses, schedules or appendices of this privacy policy;
- d) a reference to a person includes firms, companies, government entities, trusts and partnership;
- e) “including” is understood to mean “including without limitation”;
- f) reference to any statutory provision includes any modification or amendment of it;
- g) the headings and sub-headings do not form part of this privacy policy.

Scope of this privacy policy

- This privacy policy applies only to the actions of Mudford Parish Council and Users with respect to this Website. It does not extend to any websites that can be accessed from this Website including, but not limited to, any links we may provide to social media websites.
- For purposes of the applicable Data Protection Laws, Mudford Parish Council is the “data controller”. This means that Mudford Parish Council determines the purposes for which, and the manner in which, your Data is processed.

Data collected

We may collect the following Data, which includes personal Data, from you:

- a) IP address (automatically collected);
 - b) web browser type and version (automatically collected);
 - c) operating system (automatically collected);
- in each case, in accordance with this privacy policy.

How we collect data

We collect Data in the following ways:

- a) data is given to us by you; and
- b) data is collected automatically.

Data that is given to us by you

Mudford Parish Council will collect your Data in a number of ways, for example:

- a) when you contact us through the Website, by telephone, post, e-mail or through any other means;
 - b) when you use our services;
- in each case, in accordance with this privacy policy and our privacy notice.

Data that is collected automatically

To the extent that you access the Website, we will collect your Data automatically, for example:

- a) we automatically collect some information about your visit to the Website. This information helps us to make improvements to Website content and navigation, and includes your IP address, the date, times and frequency with which you access the Website and the way you use and interact with its content;
- b) we will collect your Data automatically via cookies, in line with the cookie settings on your browser. For more information about cookies, and how we use them on the Website, see the section below, headed “Cookies”.

Our use of data

Any or all of the above Data may be required by us from time to time in order to provide you with the best possible service and experience when using our Website. Specifically, Data may be used by us for the following reasons:

- a) internal record keeping;
 - b) improvement of our products / services;
- in each case, in accordance with this privacy policy.

We may use your Data for the above purposes if we deem it necessary to do so for our legitimate interests. If you are not satisfied with this, you have the right to object in certain circumstances (see the section headed “Your rights” below).

Who we share data with

We may share your Data with the following groups of people for the following reasons:

- a) our employees, agents and/or professional advisors – for analysing web traffic to improve site performance; in each case, in accordance with this privacy policy.

Keeping data secure

We will use technical and organisational measures to safeguard your Data, for example:

- a) access to your account is controlled by a password and a user name that is unique to you;
- b) we store your Data on secure servers.

Technical and organisational measures include measures to deal with any suspected data breach. If you suspect any misuse or loss or unauthorised access to your Data, please let us know immediately by contacting us via e-mail address.

If you want detailed information from Get Safe Online on how to protect your information and your computers and devices against fraud, identity theft, viruses and many other online problems, please visit www.getsafeonline.org. Get Safe Online is supported by HM Government and leading businesses.

Data retention

Unless a longer retention period is required or permitted by law, we will only hold your Data on our systems for the period necessary to fulfil the purposes outlined in this privacy policy or until you request that the Data be deleted. Even if we delete your Data, it may persist on backup or archival media for legal, tax or regulatory purposes.

Your rights

You have the following rights in relation to your Data:

- a) Right to access – the right to request (i) copies of the information we hold about you at any time, or (ii) that we modify, update or delete such information. If we provide you with access to the information we hold about you, we will not charge you for this, unless your request is “manifestly unfounded or excessive.” Where we are legally permitted to do so, we may refuse your request. If we refuse your request, we will tell you the reasons why.
- b) Right to correct – the right to have your Data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.

- c) Right to erase – the right to request that we delete or remove your Data from our systems.
- d) Right to restrict our use of your Data – the right to “block” us from using your Data or limit the way in which we can use it.
- e) Right to data portability – the right to request that we move, copy or transfer your Data.
- f) Right to object – the right to object to our use of your Data including where we use it for our legitimate interests.

To make enquiries, exercise any of your rights set out above, or withdraw your consent to the processing of your Data (where consent is our legal basis for processing your Data), please contact us via e-mail address.

If you are not satisfied with the way a complaint you make in relation to your Data is handled by us, you may be able to refer your complaint to the relevant data protection authority. For the UK, this is the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The ICO’s contact details can be found on their website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

It is important that the Data we hold about you is accurate and current. Please keep us informed if your Data changes during the period for which we hold it.

Links to other websites

This Website may, from time to time, provide links to other websites. We have no control over such websites and are not responsible for the content of these websites. This privacy policy does not extend to your use of such websites. You are advised to read the privacy policy or statement of other websites prior to using them.

Changes of business ownership and control

- Mudford Parish Council may, from time to time, expand or reduce our business and this may involve the sale and/or the transfer of control of all or part of Mudford Parish Council.
- Data provided by Users will, where it is relevant to any part of our business so transferred, be transferred along with that part and the new owner or newly controlling party will, under the terms of this privacy policy, be permitted to use the Data for the purposes for which it was originally supplied to us.

We may also disclose Data to a prospective purchaser of our business or any part of it.

In the above instances, we will take steps with the aim of ensuring your privacy is protected.

Cookies

This Website may place and access certain Cookies on your computer. Mudford Parish Council uses Cookies to improve your experience of using the Website. Mudford Parish Council has carefully chosen these Cookies and has taken steps to ensure that your privacy is protected and respected at all times.

All Cookies used by this Website are used in accordance with current UK and EU Cookie Law. Before the Website places Cookies on your computer, you will be presented with a message bar requesting your consent to set those Cookies. By

giving your consent to the placing of Cookies, you are enabling Mudford Parish Council to provide a better experience and service to you. You may, if you wish, deny consent to the placing of Cookies; however certain features of the Website may not function fully or as intended.

This Website may place the following Cookies:

- a) Strictly necessary cookies. These are cookies that are required for the operation of our website. They include, for example, cookies that enable you to log into secure areas of our website, use a shopping cart or make use of e-billing services.
- b) Analytical/performance cookies. They allow us to recognise and count the number of visitors and to see how visitors move around our website when they are using it. This helps us to improve the way our website works, for example, by ensuring that users are finding what they are looking for easily.
- c) Functionality cookies. These are used to recognise you when you return to our website. This enables us to personalise our content for you, greet you by name and remember your preferences (for example, your choice of language or region). By using the Website, you agree to our placement of functionality cookie.

- You can find a list of Cookies that we use in the Cookies Schedule.
- You can choose to enable or disable Cookies in your internet browser. By default, most internet browsers accept Cookies but this can be changed. For further details, please see the help menu in your internet browser. You can switch off Cookies at any time, however, you may lose any information that enables you to access the Website more quickly and efficiently.
- You can choose to delete Cookies at any time; however, you may lose any information that enables you to access the Website more quickly and efficiently including, but not limited to, personalisation settings.
- It is recommended that you ensure that your internet browser is up-to-date and that you consult the help and guidance provided by the developer of your internet browser if you are unsure about adjusting your privacy settings.
- For more information generally on cookies, including how to disable them, please refer to aboutcookies.org. You will also find details on how to delete cookies from your computer.

General

- You may not transfer any of your rights under this privacy policy to any other person. We may transfer our rights under this privacy policy where we reasonably believe your rights will not be affected.
- If any court or competent authority finds that any provision of this privacy policy (or part of any provision) is invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that provision or part-provision will, to the extent required, be deemed to be deleted, and the validity and enforceability of the other provisions of this privacy policy will not be affected.
- Unless otherwise agreed, no delay, act or omission by a party in exercising any right or remedy will be deemed a waiver of that, or any other, right or remedy.
- This Agreement will be governed by and interpreted according to the law of England and Wales. All disputes arising under the Agreement will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English and Welsh courts.

Changes to this privacy policy

Mudford Parish Council reserves the right to change this privacy policy as we may deem necessary from time to time or as may be required by law. Any changes will be immediately posted on the Website and you are deemed to have accepted the terms of the privacy policy on your first use of the Website following the alterations.

Cookies

Below is a list of the cookies that we use. We have tried to ensure this is complete and up to date, but if you think that we have missed a cookie or there is any discrepancy, please let us know.

a) Web Analytics Cookie. Used for tracking site usage.

MUDFORD CEMETERY

PRIVACY NOTICE

We will protect and respect your privacy.

This privacy notice covers the information you need to give us when you contact us about any cemetery matter.

We have created this notice to clarify how we:

- collect personal data
- store personal data
- process personal data

We have measures in place to protect your privacy throughout this process.

We are the Data Controller for the personal information you provide.

We hold and process all personal information in line with data protection legislation.

Categories of personal data

We will process the following personal data to perform our Cemetery tasks:

- titles
- names
- dates of birth and death
- professions
- addresses
- phone numbers
- email addresses
- signature
- death certificate
- contact details of executors
- contact details of surviving relatives
- other information such as exclusive rights of burial holders

We collect this information on our:

- Deed of Grant Application form
- Memorial Application form
- Interment form
- Form of Assent
- Form of Assignment
- Declaration Intestate
- Renunciation form

Purpose for processing

We process your data to manage applications for:

- burials
- exclusive rights of burial

- memorials
- memorial renewals
- contacting you in relation to these matters

The data we collect also forms part of the statutory record of burials in Mudford Parish. We have a statutory duty to provide this information.

Lawful basis for processing personal data

We process your data on a lawful basis.

We process your data to meet our legal obligations.

We need the information you provide to keep a record of applicants and proposals under:

- the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977
- the Cremation (England & Wales) Regulations 2017

We process your data where you have given us your explicit consent.

Providing accurate information

It is important that we hold accurate and up to date information about you. This helps us assess your needs and deliver appropriate services.

You must tell us immediately if any of your details change so that we can update your records.

It is an offence to:

- give false statements
- withhold information
- fail to disclose changes in circumstances

We will not:

- make any decisions about you based on automated processing
- send your data abroad
- store your data abroad

Sharing information

We keep your personal information on a secure database that only officers in our Cemeteries team can access.

To deliver our services we may share your personal information with:

- other departments within the Council
- contractors (cemetery caretakers)
- funeral directors
- stone masons
- crematoriums

We will only disclose information to other organisations if we have a legal duty to release data to:

- prevent or detect fraud

- prevent or detect crime
- protect public funds

Data retention

We keep data for 75 years after the closure date of the cemetery for applications for:

- grave ownership
- grave memorial
- transfer of grave ownership
- interments
- scattering of ashes

You can contact us for full details of how long we keep information and data.

Your rights

You can read our [Data Protection Policy and Subject Access Request Policy](#) to find out:

- how we maintain the security of your information
- what rights you have to access your information
- how to correct or remove your information

If you have any questions or want to find out more information you can phone or email the Parish Clerk.

If you are unhappy with how we have processed your personal information, contact the Information Commissioner's Office:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Mudford Parish Council
28th May 2026

Contact details

Parish Clerk
clerk@mudford-pc.gov.uk
www.mudford-pc.gov.uk

Mudford Parish Council

Disciplinary Procedure

This procedure is based on Acas's Discipline and Grievance Guidance.

Step 1: A disciplinary procedure is a formal way for the council to deal with an employee's:

- 'misconduct' – this is unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour
- 'capability' – this is the ability to perform the job properly

Before starting a disciplinary procedure, the council should first see whether the problem can be resolved in an informal way. This can often be the quickest and easiest solution.

The council should try solving the issue with the employee by:

- privately talking with them and any other staff involved
- listening to their point of view
- agreeing improvements to be made
- setting up a training or development plan, if it is a performance issue

Dealing with capability issues

Capability or performance is about an employee's ability to do the job. There are things the council should do to help an employee improve if there are problems with their performance at work. These might include:

- mentoring or coaching
- training

The council should try these things first before starting a formal disciplinary procedure.

What counts as misconduct

Misconduct is when an employee's inappropriate behaviour or action breaks the council's rules.

Some misconduct examples include:

- bullying
- harassment
- 'insubordination' – for example, refusing to do work
- being absent without permission – also called 'absent without leave' or 'AWOL'

If misconduct happens outside work

An employee could face disciplinary action for misconduct outside work.

For example, where an employee's behaviour in front of a parishioner reflects badly on the council.

It depends on how serious the misconduct is and whether it could affect council business. It is important the council carries out a thorough investigation and can show the effect on the council.

When there is gross misconduct

Some acts count as 'gross misconduct' because they are very serious or have very serious effects.

If the council finds there has been gross misconduct, it must still carry out an investigation and a fair disciplinary procedure. It might then decide on dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Examples of gross misconduct at work could include:

- fraud
- physical violence
- 'gross negligence' – this means a serious lack of care to duties or other people
- serious insubordination – for example, refusing to follow policies or take reasonable orders from a supervisor

Step 2: Following a fair procedure

If the council feels it needs to start a disciplinary procedure, it is important to tell the employee straight away.

This should be in writing, for example in a letter or an email. This should include:

- information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance
- possible consequences, for example a written warning

The employee should have this information in time to prepare for a disciplinary hearing. This is a meeting where the council considers all the evidence before making a decision.

The council must make sure it follows a full and fair procedure throughout.

This is for the protection of the employee, the council and the council itself.

The importance of following a fair procedure

The Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures is the minimum the council will follow.

Carrying out an investigation

To follow a fair procedure, the council must carry out an investigation. This is to get as much information as the council reasonably can about the employee's alleged misconduct or poor performance.

Although the Acas Code is not the law, if a disciplinary case reaches an employment tribunal, judges will take into consideration whether the council has followed the Acas Code in a fair way.

The Acas Code mainly applies to those legally classed as an employee. But to keep good working relationships, the council should follow the same fair procedure for all workers.

Training for councils and managers

To learn more about the Acas Code and how to follow a formal procedure, the council can book Acas training on discipline and grievance.

If anything similar has happened before

The council should check whether it has dealt with a similar situation before.

To ensure fair treatment, the council must follow the procedure and policy in the same way for each disciplinary case.

It should gather evidence and make a decision based on what it knows about each case.

Keep talking

It is important throughout the procedure for the council to keep talking with both the employee being disciplined and any other staff affected.

Clear, regular and confidential communication can help avoid misunderstandings, a drop in work morale, stress or other mental health problems, further action such as the employee raising a grievance, or legal action in the future.

The council must keep all personal information confidential in line with data protection law.

Looking after employees' wellbeing and mental health

Going through a disciplinary procedure can be very stressful. It is important that the council considers the wellbeing and mental health of its employees.

Looking after wellbeing and offering support can help prevent absence, mental health problems, or existing mental health problems getting worse.

For example, as well as regular communication, the council could arrange meetings in a more private and comfortable location if this would help the employee.

If the employee raises a grievance

If the employee raises a grievance during the disciplinary procedure, the council can pause the disciplinary and deal with the grievance first.

It might be appropriate to deal with both at the same time if the grievance and disciplinary cases are related.

If the employee wants to resign

The employee might want to resign or feel they have to leave when facing a disciplinary.

This could lead to the employee later claiming constructive dismissal at an employment tribunal. They can only do this if they have worked for the council for two years or more.

The council should try and talk through any concerns with the employee. It should give them the chance to change their decision to resign.

Step 3 Carrying out a fair procedure

To follow a fair procedure, the council must carry out an investigation. This is to get as much information as the council reasonably can about the employee's alleged misconduct or poor performance.

Step 4 The hearing

Where the investigation shows the employee has a case to answer, the council should invite them to a disciplinary hearing. This is a meeting where the council hears all the evidence before making a decision.

Preparing for the hearing

The hearing should be held as soon as possible after the investigation, while giving reasonable time for the employee to prepare.

In good time before the hearing, the council should put in writing to the employee the allegations, evidence, date, time and location of the hearing, the right to be accompanied and the possible outcomes.

The right to be accompanied

By law, an employee or worker has the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing.

What happens in a disciplinary hearing

The hearing is the chance for both the council and the employee to state their case.

At the end of the hearing, the council should take time to consider the case carefully before making a decision and should confirm the outcome in writing.

Step 5 Deciding the outcome

After following a fair disciplinary procedure, the council should decide on the best outcome based on the findings, what is fair and reasonable, and what the council has done in similar cases before.

Dismissal

The council might dismiss the employee where appropriate. Dismissal should only be decided by a person with the authority to do so on behalf of the council.

The council must follow a fair and reasonable disciplinary procedure before deciding on dismissal.

The employee's right of appeal

The council should offer the employee the right of appeal.

Step 6 After the disciplinary

After a disciplinary procedure has finished, the council may talk privately with staff directly involved while keeping the outcome confidential.

Keeping a record

The council should keep a written record of all disciplinary cases in line with data protection law.

References after disciplinary action

By law, the council does not have to provide a reference. When it does, it must be fair, accurate and consistent.

Mudford Parish Council
EXPENSES POLICY

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Purpose

This policy sets out the council's rules on how employees can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are properly reimbursed for legitimate business expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes. It does not apply to councillors.

General procedure

The council will reimburse you for actual expenditure that is incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in connection with authorised duties that you undertake in the course of your employment. To claim for expenses, you must use the council's expenses claim form and set out the reasons why the expense was incurred on the claim form. If you are unsure whether an expense can be claimed, you must seek prior written authorisation from the Chair of Governance and Resources Committee or the clerk.

Expenses will not be paid unless supporting evidence is provided, together with a completed expense claim form. This should include original receipts or invoices with the date and time of the transaction (unless you are claiming for mileage). When claiming for travel expenses on public transport, you should enclose the tickets showing the departure point and destination of your journey, where possible. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted. Where you are submitting a VAT receipt, you should set out:

- the name and VAT registration number of the retailer or service provider;
- the goods and services provided; and
- the amount of VAT payable.

Once completed and signed, you should submit your expense claim form to the clerk or Chair of Governance and resources Committee for approval. Once approved the claim form should be sent to the clerk/RFO for payment.

Expenses claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from the clerk or chair of the Governance and Resources Committee. The council reserves the right to withhold any payment where prior written approval has not been given.

The council may return an expense claim form to you without payment if it is completed incorrectly or lacks supporting evidence.

The council will pay claims for authorised expenses by BACS transfer into the same bank account into which your salary is paid.

In general, you should not incur expenses other than in the categories listed below. However, if you have claims for expenditure other than for those categories listed below, you should seek written approval from the clerk or Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee before incurring the expense. The council will accept email as written approval where it is required in this policy.

Any queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the clerk or Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee.

Homeworkers

If you are a Homeworker, your normal place of work as stated in your contract will be your home. The council will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred by homeworkers in the course of their duties upon receipt of satisfactory claims.

The council will provide the following equipment necessary to enable homeworking employees to do their job.

- Laptop or personal computer

Alternatively, the council will agree with homeworkers a suitable sum to cover use of their own equipment.

The council will also pay the clerk/RFO for the costs associated with heating, lighting, etc. HMRC rules allow for some of these expenses to be paid tax-free (see HMRC guidance: www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking/whats-exempt) at £26/month.

Training

When attending training courses all employees and be able to claim travel expenses for the difference in the usual home to work costs. Where the training takes place outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the basis as time spent on training is working time.

Some training can be very expensive and as a condition for funding training, the council requires full repayment of all costs incurred for any training course in excess of £100 should an employee not complete the training.

The council agrees to pay for the clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Travel

Employees and the Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee should consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are more appropriate means (for example teleconferencing or video-conferencing).

Rail

You may claim for standard class rail fares only. Where possible, rail journeys should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

Use of your own car

It may be appropriate and cost-effective to use your own car when travelling on business, for example if you are travelling with other staff or councillors or, where there is limited public transport to your destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport. Any use of your own car on business is subject to you:

- holding a full UK driving licence;
- ensuring that your car is roadworthy and fully registered; and

- holding comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use.

Prior authorisation should be sought from the clerk or Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee before using your own car on business. The council accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on business. The council will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on your own car.

To claim for petrol expenditure, you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. The council will pay you a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for mileage under 10,000 miles and 25p per mile for mileage over 10,000 miles, or such other rate as set out from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs. The council will pay for tolls, congestion charges and parking costs incurred, where applicable.

Use of bicycle or Motorcycle

If use of your bicycle or motorcycle is approved, you can claim a mileage allowance of 20p or 24p per mile respectively. Any use of your own motorcycle on business is subject the same requirements as a car (see above).

Taxis

Any use of taxis will require prior approval and only in limited circumstances. These are:

- where taking a taxi would result in a significantly shorter travel time than using public transport;
- where there are several employees travelling together; or
- where personal security and safety of employees is an issue, for example taxis may be permitted after 9.30pm.

You must obtain a receipt with details of the date, place of departure and destination of the journey.

Overnight accommodation

As a guideline for travel on council business you should book accommodation equivalent to three-star standard or less. You may book hotel accommodation of up to £120 maximum in a major city and £100 elsewhere. It is your responsibility to ensure that any hotel reservations are cancelled within the required cancellation period if they are no longer required.

Meals

If you are required to be away from home on council business, you may claim up to:

- £10 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate);
- £15 for lunch; and
- £20 for dinner.

The maximum amounts above are inclusive of drinks. Alcohol cannot be reclaimed under any circumstances.

You should supply receipts and invoices for all hotel and meal expenses other than for the daily allowance, where no receipt is required.

Entertainment/gifts

The council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts. Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered to you should be reported immediately to the clerk or the Chair of the Governance and Resources Committee). As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

Annual events

The council may decide to hold a staff event, such as a Christmas meal or other celebration. Except where agreed to the contrary, attendance is not compulsory, and you will remain responsible for any expenses you incur.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel between your home and usual place of work (except in exceptional circumstances for early morning/late night transport as set out above);
- the cost of any travel undertaken for personal reasons;
- the cost of any travel for your partner or spouse;
- any fines or penalties incurred while on council business for whatever reason, including penalties for not paying for a rail ticket in advance of boarding the train and penalties or fines associated with motoring offences, including speeding or parking fines, clamping or vehicle recovery charges;
- alcohol; and
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

You are required to pay for any travel costs incurred by your partner or spouse in the event that he or she accompanies you on business. Your spouse or partner must have adequate travel insurance for that journey.

False claims

If the council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Council, it may request further details from you. The council will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided. Where payment has been made to you prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it may deduct the value of that claim from your salary.

Any abuse of the council's expenses policy will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- false expenses claims;
- claims for expenses that were not legitimately incurred;
- claims for personal gain;
- claims for hospitality and/or gifts without them having been declared; and

- receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgment.

The council will take disciplinary action where appropriate and, in certain circumstances, may treat a breach of this policy as gross misconduct, which may result in your summary dismissal. In addition, the council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

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

This policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on XXX

Mudford Parish Council

Expenses Claim Form

This form is for employees to claim authorised expenses incurred while carrying out council duties. Receipts must be attached (except mileage). Claims should be submitted within 30 days of the expense.

Claimant Details

Name:
Job title / role:
Home address:
Email / phone:

Expense Details

Please complete one line per expense. Add extra pages if required.

Date	Expense Description	Amount	Receipt Attached (Y/N)

Total amount claimed (£): _____

Mileage Claims (if applicable)

Date:
From:
To:
Purpose of journey:
Miles travelled:
Mileage amount claimed (£) (at a rate of 45p/mile):

Declaration

I confirm that the expenses claimed were wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred on authorised council business, the information provided is correct, and all required receipts are attached.

Claimant signature: _____

Date: _____

Approval

Approved by (name):
Role: Clerk Chair of Governance and Resources Committee
Approved amount (£):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Payment Details (office use)

Payment method: BACS
Date paid:
Reference:

This form is based on the Mudford Parish Council Expenses Policy. False or inaccurate claims may result in non-payment and further action.

Mudford Parish Council

Document Retention and Disposal Procedure

Introduction

The council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of documents.

Records created and maintained by the council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

Documents may be retained in either hard copy form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this procedure, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage, and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the council.

In contrast to the above the council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

Scope and objectives of the procedure

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

- retained – and for how long
- disposed of – and if so by what method

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

- 'With compliments' slips
- catalogues and trade journals
- non-acceptance of invitations
- trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to council business
- requests for information such as maps, plans, or advertising material
- out of date distribution lists.

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

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

Roles and responsibilities for document retention and disposal

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

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

Document retention protocol

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

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

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

To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:

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

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

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

Document disposal protocol

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

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

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

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

- non-confidential records: place in wastepaper bin for disposal
- confidential records or records giving personal information: shred documents
- deletion of computer records
- transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office

The following principles should be followed when disposing of records:

- all records containing personal or confidential information should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. Failure to do so could lead to the council being prosecuted under the General Data Protection Regulation, the Freedom of Information Act or cause reputational damage

- where computer records are deleted steps should be taken to ensure that data is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner
- where documents are of historical interest it may be appropriate that they are transmitted to the County Records office
- back-up copies of documents should also be destroyed (including electronic or photographed documents unless specific provisions exist for their disposal).

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

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

Data Protection Act 2018 – obligation to dispose of certain data

The Data Protection Act 2018 ('Fifth Principle') requires that personal information must not be retained longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally obtained. Section 1 of the Data Protection Act defines personal information as:

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

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

It includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the council or other person in respect of the individual.

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

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

- personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met
- personal data shall only be obtained for specific purposes and processed in a compatible manner
- personal data shall be adequate, relevant, but not excessive
- personal data shall be accurate and up to date

- personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary
- personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject
- personal data shall be kept secure

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

Scanning of documents

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

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

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

The original, signed AGAR should also be retained in perpetuity – as should all minutes of meetings. These documents should be deposited with the County Archives when possible.

Review of document retention

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

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

- *Local Council Administration*, Charles Arnold-Baker, 14th edition, Chapter 11
- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) – *Local Council Documents and Records*, August 2022
- NALC – *Freedom of Information*, April 2021
- [Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

List of documents

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

This policy was adapted from SLCC's (Society of Local Council Clerks) document, and the copyright remains with SLCC.

Mudfrod Parish Council

Mudford Parish Council Appendix A: List of documents for retention or disposal

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed paper copies of council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than five years they should be archived and deposited with the Higher Authority
Agendas	Five years	Management	Bin (shred confidential waste)
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Scales of fees and charges	Six years	Management	Bin
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive	N/A
Receipt books of all kinds	Six years	VAT	Bin
Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Quotations and tenders	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Paid invoices	Six years	VAT	Confidential waste
Paid cheques	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
VAT records	Six years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Confidential waste
Petty cash, postage, and telephone books	Six years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
Timesheets	Last completed audit year Three years	Audit (requirement) Personal injury (best practice)	Bin
Wages books/payroll	12 years	Superannuation	Confidential waste
Insurance policies	While valid (but see next two items below)	Management	Bin
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Bin
Play area equipment inspection reports	21 years		
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Title deeds, leases, agreements, Contracts	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Members' allowances register	Six years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant		Bin

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information)	N/A

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Magazines and journals	<p>Council may wish to keep its own publications</p> <p>For others retain for as long as they are useful and relevant</p>	<p>The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council which after 1 February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table) to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library). Printed works as defined by the 2003 Act published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds</p>	Bin if applicable
Record-keeping			

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
<p>To ensure records are easily accessible it is necessary to comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of files stored in cabinets will be kept • Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names 	<p>The electronic files will be backed up in a cloud-based programme as appropriate.</p>	<p>Management</p>	<p>Documentation no longer required will be disposed of, ensuring any confidential documents are destroyed as confidential waste</p> <p>A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR</p>
<p>General correspondence</p>	<p>Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in the policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be kept. Records should be kept for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.</p>	<p>Management</p>	<p>Bin (shred confidential waste)</p> <p>A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.</p>

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Correspondence relating to staff	If related to Audit, see relevant sections above. Should be kept securely and personal data in relation to staff should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held. Likely time limits for tribunal claims between 3–6 months. Recommend this period be for three years	After an employment relationship has ended, a council may need to retain and access staff records for former staff for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions, and pensions, and in respect of any related legal claims made against the council	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
<p>Documents from legal matters, negligence, and other torts</p> <p>Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified, the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.</p>			
Negligence	Six years		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Defamation	One year		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Contract	Six years		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Leases	12 years		Confidential waste
Sums recoverable by statute	Six years		Confidential waste
Personal injury	Three years		Confidential waste
To recover land	12 years		Confidential waste
Rent	Six years		Confidential waste
Breach of trust	None		Confidential waste
Trust deeds	Indefinite		N/A
For Halls, centres, recreation grounds			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application to hire Invoices 	Six years	VAT	Confidential waste
Record of tickets issued			A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Lettings diaries	Electronic files linked to accounts	VAT	N/A
Terms and conditions	Six years	Management	Bin
Event monitoring forms	Six years unless required for claims, insurance or legal purposes	Management	Bin. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
For allotments			

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Minutes	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Legal papers	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
For burial grounds			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of fees collected • Register of burials • Register of purchased graves • Register/plan of grave spaces • Register of memorials • Applications for interment • Applications for right to erect memorials • Disposal certificates • Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial 	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)	N/A
Planning papers			
Applications	One year	Management	Bin
Appeals	One year unless significant development	Management	Bin
Trees	One year	Management	Bin
Local development plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Bin
Local plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Bin

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Town/neighbourhood plans	Indefinite – final adopted plans	Historical purposes	N/A
CCTV			
Daily notes	Daily	Data protection	Confidential waste
Radio rotas	One week	Management	Confidential waste
Work rotas	One month	Management	Confidential waste
Observation sheets	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Stats	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Signing in sheets	Three years	Management	Confidential waste
Review requests	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Discs – master and working	For as long as required	Data protection	Confidential waste
Internal Operations Procedure Manual	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Code of Practice	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Photographs/digital prints	31 days	Data protection	Confidential waste

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