Supporting Papers

Mudford Parish Council

Governance and Resources Committee meeting

12th November 2026

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Parish Clerk/RFO

GR26/18 Cemetery fees and Cemetery Regulations

Cemetery fees

Members should note that, should the fees be changed, the Regulations must also be amended, as the fees form part of the Regulations. Accordingly, the Cemetery Invoice would also need to be updated. Please refer to the Cemetery Regulations and the Invoice document.

The Clerk has undertaken a review of cemetery fees at cemeteries within the surrounding area to provide a comparison of charges and assist the Council when considering any future amendments to the Cemetery Fees and Charges Schedule. The table excludes churchyards. The review focuses on the Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) fee, any additional interment fee, and whether higher charges apply to non-residents.

Cemetery	EROB fee	Additional Interment Fee	Right to erect a memorial	Non-residents charged more?
Curry Rivel	Grave: £425(single plot)/£650(double) Ashes plot: £200(single)/£300(double) Plots can be pre-purchased	£350 £240	£160 Additional inscription £45	Yes – double for EROB and interments (not for memorial installation etc)
East Cocker	Grave: £700 (double plot) Ashes plot: £320 Plots cannot be pre-purchased	1st Interment £160 2nd interment £485 1st interment £110 2nd interment £220	1st inscription £220 2nd inscription £85	N/A (only residents can purchase EROB)
Ilchester	Grave: £200 Ashes plot: £200	£350 2nd burial: £150 £225 2nd burial £150	Grave: £150 Ashes plot upright: £100 Ashes plot flat: £75	By discretion - double
Langport	No info available on the website			
Martock	Grave: £618 Ashes plot: £258	£258 £145 From 1 year of age to 18 years: £73	Monument: £206 Tablet: £155	Yes - treble
Mudford	Grave: £400 (includes 1st interment) Row T ashes plot: £300 Ashes Plot: £250 pre-purchase prices differ	Additional interment: all at £200		Yes - quadruple
Somerton	Grave: £520(single)/£720 (double) Ashes plot: £320(single)/£450 (double)	Interment fee: £180 Interment fee: £180	Memorial: £145 (all sizes)	Yes – treble (except monument and inscription fees etc)
Wincanton	Grave: £400(single)/£600(double) Garden of remembrance: £300(double)/£200(single)	£150 £130	Memorial: £130 Tablet: £60	Yes – double (for EROB and Interments)

Cemetery Regulations

The clerk recommends:

1. The regulations are amended to include the text below as point 7.2 on page 5:

The Parish Council does not arrange or undertake the digging of graves. Responsibility for arranging grave excavation rests with the appointed Funeral Director, who must ensure that the work is carried out by suitably qualified and experienced grave diggers with the necessary knowledge and expertise to undertake the excavation safely and in accordance with all relevant legislation, industry standards, and the Parish Council's Cemetery Regulations.

2. The clerk recommends removing the sentence 8.5 on page 6 (repetitive), please refer to the regulations.

3. The regulations are amended to include more information regarding double grave depth, please see the below information from ICCM:

This can be seen pictorially in the diagram below. This is the MINIMUM depth you would dig for a double depth grave in order to allow for 3 feet of soil to be placed on top of the last interment. It doesn't take into account the fact that some coffins are deeper than 1'3", so you could be safer to dig to 6½ or 7 feet.

Cremated remains can be interred in a container within the 3 feet of soil above the last interment. There is no legal determination of the depth that cremated remains should be interred, however you should ensure that there is a minimum of 6 inches of soil on top of the last interment and bear in mind that you don't want the ashes container to be too close to the surface of the ground in case you have burrowing activity in the cemetery from moles, rabbits or badgers. You should ideally be looking to inter cremated remains caskets at a depth of 2 feet.

The Clerk would prefer the graves to be dug deeper and has therefore provided the Council with the two options set out below: Option 1, the standard recommendation; and Option 2, graves dug to a minimum depth of 6½ feet.

Option 1

Insert as point 7.4

For a double-depth grave, the minimum excavation depth shall be sufficient to allow a minimum of 900mm (3 feet) of soil cover above the uppermost coffin. As a guide, this will typically require excavation to a depth of at least 1.8 metres (6 feet), although deeper excavation of approximately 2.0 to 2.1 metres (6½ to 7 feet) may be necessary depending on the dimensions of the coffins being interred.

Where cremated remains are to be interred within an existing grave, they may be placed within the soil cover above the most recent interment, provided that a minimum of 150mm (6 inches) of soil remains above the cremated remains container. Consideration should be given to ensuring sufficient depth to protect the container from disturbance caused by normal ground activity, including burrowing animals. As a guide, cremated remains caskets should ideally be interred at a depth of approximately 600mm (2 feet).

Option 2

Insert as point 7.4 page 5

For all double-depth graves, the minimum excavation depth shall be 6.5 feet (1.98 metres) below ground level. Where coffin dimensions or site conditions require, a greater depth may be necessary to ensure

that a minimum of 3 feet (900mm) of soil cover is maintained above the uppermost coffin following the final interment. Cremated remains may be interred within the soil above the uppermost coffin, provided that a minimum of 6 inches (150mm) of soil cover is maintained above the container. Cremated remains caskets should normally be interred at a depth of approximately 2 feet (600mm).

GR26/19 Community Grant Policy and Grant application forms proposed amendments

Background
The policy and grant application forms were last reviewed in summer 2024 and are therefore due for review.

Clerk's recommendation (please refer to the "NEW" grant application form where all changes/additions are highlighted):

1. The Clerk recommends using a single application form rather than two separate forms, as the only difference between them is the title (Regular Funding and One-Off Funding of £1,000 or less). The application form could include a question asking whether the application forms part of a regular funding request anticipated during the same financial year, or words to that effect.
2. The grant application form should include a question asking when the grant funding will be required.
3. Mudford Parish Council (MPC), its councillors and staff must promote equality and diversity and avoid unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. To help ensure compliance, MPC should require applicant organisations to provide one of the following:
    - An Equality and Diversity Policy and/or Equal Opportunities Policy; or
    - A constitution or other governing document that includes provisions relating to equality and diversity.

    In addition, MPC should:

    - Include project-specific questions within the grant application form, such as: "How does your project promote equality and diversity?"
    - Ask applicants how their project will be accessible to, and benefit, different groups within the community.
    - Include questions relating to accessibility and inclusivity within the grant monitoring form.

4. The Grant Awarding Policy should include a section on grant monitoring. This should state that grant recipients agree to complete MPC's grant monitoring form (the clerk has made changes to the current form – please refer to the "new" monitoring form) at the end of the financial year, demonstrating how the funds were used and the outcomes achieved.
5. In addition, there is currently no requirement for the unused funds to be returned. Please refer to SLCC guidance on grant applications.

6. Should the Committee agree to recommend a single grant application form, the policy will need to be amended, as it currently refers to separate requests for regular annual funding and one-off funding. Please refer to the attached policy. The Clerk has inserted comments throughout the document for the Committee's consideration.

GR 26/20 Communications Policy proposed amendments

Clerk's recommendation: To insert the below text before "Communication with the press and public".

Communications Channels

Mudford Parish Council communicates information to residents and interested parties through its official website, www.mudford-pc.gov.uk. The website is administered by the Clerk and serves as the Council's primary source of published information, including agendas, minutes, policies, notices, and other council documents.

The Council maintains three official noticeboards:

- The noticeboard opposite the Village Hall displays full meeting agendas and statutory notices.
- The noticeboards at Hales Meadow and Primrose Lane display meeting notices and other key council information. Due to space constraints, full agendas are not normally displayed at these locations.

The Council operates an official Facebook page, "Mudford Parish Council", which is administered by the Clerk. The page is used to share Council information, public notices, community updates and other information of local importance.

Comments on the Council's Facebook page are disabled. Residents wishing to contact the Council should do so via the Clerk using the Council's published contact details.

GR26/21 Scheme of Delegation proposed amendment

Clerk's recommendation: To insert/change the below text as point 2.3

Planning Applications and Delegated Authority

The Parish Clerk shall notify councillors of all planning applications and related planning matters affecting the parish which are received by, or notified to, the Council. Councillors shall be provided with sufficient information to identify and consider the application and to access any supporting documents. The Clerk shall determine what information is circulated

directly to councillors and is not required to distribute all plans, reports or supporting documents relating to an application.

The Parish Clerk has delegated authority to act on behalf of the Council in all administrative and procedural matters relating to planning applications and associated consultations. This authority includes, but is not limited to:

- Reviewing amended plans and new information submitted during the lifetime of a planning application.
- Reviewing applications that form part of, relate to, or arise from the same development site.
- Seeking clarification from planning officers, applicants, agents, consultants and other relevant parties.
- Asking questions and requesting further information where the Clerk considers this necessary to understand a proposal or its implications.
- Requesting corrections to factual inaccuracies.
- Requesting extensions to consultation periods.
- Corresponding with the Local Planning Authority regarding any planning matter affecting the parish.
- Re-stating, explaining, defending or expanding upon an existing position previously resolved by the Council.
- Submitting procedural, factual or technical comments which do not alter the Council's previously agreed position.

This delegation is intended particularly for major or strategic developments where multiple planning applications, amendments, reserved matters applications, condition discharge applications, Section 73 applications, appeals or related submissions may be under consideration simultaneously. In such circumstances, the Clerk may correspond directly with the Local Planning Authority and other parties as necessary to ensure the Council's interests are properly represented throughout the planning process.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Clerk may engage in dialogue with planning officers and other relevant parties, ask questions, seek clarification, obtain additional information and respond to matters arising from such discussions without requiring further authority from the Council, provided that the Clerk does not change the Council's formally agreed position.

The Clerk shall not:

- Determine the Council's position on an application where no position has previously been agreed.
- Submit a new objection, support or neutral position on behalf of the Council.
- Withdraw or materially alter a Council resolution.
- Make planning judgements on matters raising new material planning considerations not previously considered by the Council.

Where amended plans, additional information or subsequent applications introduce significant new planning issues or materially alter the scale, form, nature, impact or planning merits of a proposal, the matter shall be referred back to councillors for determination.

Consultation deadlines

Where the consultation period (deadline for comments) for a planning application expires before the date of the next ordinary meeting of the Council, the application shall be circulated by email by the Clerk to all councillors. Any councillor wishing the application to be considered by the Council must notify the Clerk within three clear days of the email being sent that they wish an Extraordinary Meeting to be convened.

If no such request is received within three clear days, the Clerk shall respond to the Local Planning Authority on behalf of the Council stating that the Council has no comments on the application.

If a councillor requests that the application be considered by the Council, the Clerk shall seek an extension to the consultation deadline from the Local Planning Authority. Where an extension is granted, the application shall be considered at the next available meeting of the Council or at an Extraordinary Meeting if deemed necessary by the Chair. Where an extension is refused or cannot be obtained, the Chair shall convene an Extraordinary Meeting to enable the Council to determine its response before the consultation deadline expires.

Delegated Authority to Obtain Legal Advice on Planning Matters

The Parish Clerk is delegated authority to instruct Richard Buxton Solicitors, or such other solicitors, barristers, counsel or planning law specialists as the Clerk considers appropriate, on behalf of Mudford Parish Council in relation to any past, current or future planning application, planning decision, planning appeal, enforcement matter, judicial review or associated planning matter affecting the interests of the parish.

This delegation includes obtaining legal advice, commissioning legal opinions, providing instructions, corresponding with legal representatives, approving necessary documentation and taking such preliminary procedural steps as are reasonably necessary to protect the Council's interests.

This delegation specifically includes, but is not limited to, matters relating to planning application 14/02554/OUT, Land North of Mudford Road (Land OS 3400), and any associated proceedings arising from those matters.

The Clerk may incur expenditure under this delegation up to a maximum of £1,500 (plus VAT), which shall be charged to the Council's "Legal Advice" budget line, cost centre and cost code. Any expenditure exceeding the approved budget shall require prior Council approval.

GR26/21 To consider and agree the new Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy and Statement, and to agree a recommendation for adoption by the council.

Cllr Brown attended SALC's "The Worker Protection Act 2023" training and reported that the training emphasised the council's legal duty to take a proactive approach to preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. Cllr Brown therefore recommended that the Council adopt a Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy as soon as practicable and provided North Somerset Council's policy as guidance. The Clerk reviewed and revised both the policy and the accompanying statement to make them suitable for the Parish Council.

Please refer to the attached documents.

The Clerk notes that there is no mention of councillors in either the policy or the statement. Perhaps it would be prudent to contact SALC and ask whether the Code of Conduct is likely to be amended in line with the new legislation, as the only references to harassment are contained on pages 4 and 5:

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.