

CONSTITUTION

Comprising:

Part One:

Preamble (Pages 1 - 2)

Part Two

Standing Orders (Pages 3 -19)

Part Three

Delegated Powers (Page 20 - 21)

Part Four

Financial Regulations (Pages 22 - 28)

Approved by the Parish Council

7 September 2011

Incorporating amendments subsequently approved by the Parish Council on
6/7/11; 5/10/11; 2/11/11; 1/2/12, 2/5/12, 13/6/12, 27/6/12 and 4/7/12; 6/3/14;
2/2/15;6/7/2015

11/04/2016;05/12/2016;10/04/2017;29/01/2018;19/03/2019; 08/04/2020

PART ONE: PREAMBLE

1. Summary

- (a) The Parish Council has agreed a constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Constitution comprises this preamble, standing orders, delegated powers and financial regulations.
- (b) The name of the council is Great Horkeley Parish Council. The Parish Council exists within a statutory legal framework and shall consist of 9 members. In the event that vacancies occur members of the Council may be co-opted in accordance with the law. Non - members may assist the council in accordance with the law and the standing orders in Part Two below.
- (c) The public may participate in meetings in accordance with the Standing Orders in Part Two below.
- (d) The Council generally meets on the first Monday of the Month excluding the month of August unless it decides otherwise. It also has an Annual Meeting in May and the rules around this are set out in Part Two Standing Orders.
- (e) The Council makes the decisions as a whole but it can delegate certain decisions to a Committee or the Clerk and/or Responsible Finance Officer. No decisions can be made by the Council or its committees unless a relevant item is placed upon the agenda of the meeting where the decision is to be made.
- (f) The council will make available all agendas, minutes and other documents on the basis of a presumption of disclosure and provision of information and in accordance with the requirements imposed by the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts and the Council's adopted publication schemes and other relevant policies.
- (g) The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Constitution is to enable the Council to work towards achieving its aspirations for the parish as set out in the Council's Annual Report including:

- Enabling the Council to provide clear community leadership in partnership with citizens and organisations for the long term well-being of the area.
- Support local democratic decision making and enable councillors to represent their constituents effectively;
- Enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- Ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions;
- Create an effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- Ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
- Support the involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision making;
- Enable the Council to contribute effectively to the issues which need co-operation between local agencies as set out in the Community Strategy;
- Keep within the law and codes of conduct.

3. Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) Proportionality (i.e.the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- (b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers and external consultants;
- (c) Respect for human rights, and equality and diversity;
- (d) A presumption in favour of openness; and
- (e) Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- (f) Transparency (i.e. explaining what options were considered and giving the reasons for the decision).

PART TWO: STANDING ORDERS

Amendment approved 6 March 2014 minute ref: 11(iv)
Amendment approved 2 February 2015 minute ref: 11(iii)
Amendment approved 8 April 2020 minute ref: 6a

1 Meetings

Mandatory for full Council meetings	●
Mandatory for committee meetings	●
Mandatory for sub-committee meetings	●
Emboldened paragraphs are statutory	

- 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 **When calculating the 3 clear days for notice of a meeting to councillors and the public, 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 shall not count.**

- c **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.**

- d Subject to standing order 1(c) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any matter within the powers of the Parish Council in accordance with the Councils agreed *Procedure for Public Speaking at Council Meetings*.

- e Members of the public whose representation has been accepted may address the council for a maximum of three minutes. A representation will be accepted if it relates to a matter which is within the powers of the Council, or to any other matter which the council may consider drawing to the attention of Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council or other relevant body.

- f A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The Chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

- g A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the Chairman of the meeting.

h Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

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k Intentionally Blank

● l **Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting is permitted within the criteria below:**

● The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency; it allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also allows the use of social networking websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

While no prior permission is required to carry out this activity, it is advisable that any person wishing to film or audio-record a public meeting inform the Parish Clerk so that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting. The Parish Clerk will then be able to inform the relevant Chairman of what is to take place.

Where the Council has been so notified, the Chairman will, at the beginning of the relevant meeting, make an announcement that the meeting will be filmed, recorded or photographed. A person attending does not have a right to give an oral report or commentary during a meeting, as this would be disruptive to the good of the meeting. A person filming, recording or other reporting of a meeting is likely to include the personal data of individuals. That person must take care to ensure that personal data is used in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

No filming, recording, photographing or other reporting of children and vulnerable adults shall take place except with the consent of a parent, legal guardian or teacher for a child, (in the case of a vulnerable adult it is a medical professional, a care or legal guardian. At the start of the meeting the Chairman should inform those who wish to film, record, take photographs, or otherwise report on the proceedings of a meeting about the restrictions which apply in respect of a vulnerable adult or child.

An area will be designated for members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting, but who object to being filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise reported about. The chairman should remind those people reporting on the meeting to avoid those sitting in the designated area.

It should be noted that the Chairman of a meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of the above activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the running of the meeting. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:

- Public disturbance, disruption including excessive noise in setting up equipment or re-siting equipment during the debate or discussion.
- Asking for people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.
- Intrusive lighting and use of flash photography.
- The meeting agreeing to formally exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the exempt/confidential nature of the business being discussed, in accordance with statutory procedures e.g. staffing or contractual issues
- You may be excluded from a meeting if you act in a disruptive manner.

In allowing recording, filming or photography to take place, the Council requires those participating not to edit the recordings, film or photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being

photographed, filmed or recorded. Doing so may lead to restrictions on access to record, film or photograph future meetings. Any restrictions would be decided by the Monitoring Officer.

Unless given permission by the Chairman, councillors should not record, photograph or film other councillors, staff or members of the public during a meeting.

Those intending to bring large equipment, or wishing to discuss any special requirements are advised to contact the Parish Clerk in advance of the meeting to seek advice and guidance. Any filming or photography must take place from a fixed point. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings. Filming elsewhere in the building outside of the meeting room is not permitted without permission.

Notice of the filming/recording/broadcasting of meetings will be displayed in and outside the place of meeting and meeting agendas will include the following:

“The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Parish Clerk (in advance) who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.”

Members of the public speaking at, or attending, the meeting (including asking questions or presenting petitions) must not be filmed if they have indicated that they do not wish to be included.

Recording and reporting the council’s meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and the laws of libel and defamation.

- m In accordance with standing order 1(c) above, the press shall be provided 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 Chairman may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman (if any).
- o The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
- p Subject to standing order 1 (y) below, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present and voting thereon.
- q The Chairman may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote. (*See also standing orders 2 (i) and (j) below.*)
- r Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against

that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

- s **The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present and absent.**
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- t **If prior to a meeting, a Councillor has submitted reasons for his absence at the meeting which is then approved by a resolution, such resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the approval was given.**
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- u **The code of conduct adopted by the Council shall apply to councillors in respect of the entire meeting.**
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- v **An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes. (See also standing orders 7 and 8 below.)**
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- w **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one third of the whole number of members of the Council or relevant committee or sub-committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than 3.**
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- x **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be adjourned. Any outstanding business of a meeting so adjourned shall be transacted at a following meeting.**
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- y Meetings shall not exceed a period of 2 hours and 30 Minutes.
- z The parish council can determine not to hold their annual meeting. So full council meetings that were scheduled in the mandatory March to May period can now be postponed.
- aa The parish council has the flexibility to hold meetings at any time of day and on any day, to alter how frequently meetings can be held and to move or cancel meetings without requiring further notice.
- bb Meetings can be held remotely. For the purposes of any statutory requirement, members of the local authority will be considered as attending a meeting if they can hear, and where practicable see, and be heard and, where practicable, be seen by other members and the public. This allows for meetings to be held by remote means including via telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webchat and live streaming. The “where practicable” wording is important because it means that

it is not an absolute requirement that every participant can be seen all the time, even when they are speaking.

- cc Meetings can be held remotely attendance at meetings in relation to voting, access to documents and facilities that can be employed to allow the meeting to be held remotely to suit their own circumstances.
- dd The “place” at which a local authority meeting is held is not confined to the council building. The “place” may be where the instigator or arranger of the meeting is, or electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers. It could be an officer’s or member’s home.
- ee Requirements for a meeting being “open to the public” are satisfied by the parish council holding the meeting remotely. This enables local authorities to facilitate and hold remote meetings outside of the council building and/or remotely and allows for members of the public to attend remotely.
- ff Where documents must be “open to inspection”, this is satisfied by the documents being published on the council’s website. Documents include notices, agendas, reports, background papers, minutes etc. The publication, posting or making available of documents at council office includes publication on the Council’s website.
- gg Where the annual meeting is not held, the appointments which would normally be dealt with at the meeting will continue until the next annual meeting of the authority or when the local authority determines, providing continuity of membership.

2 Ordinary Council meetings

See also standing order 1 above

- 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 new councillors elected take office.
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7:30 pm.
- 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 directs.
- e Intentionally Blank
- f The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council shall be the first business completed at the annual meeting of the Council.
- g The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- h The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- i In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- k Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall be as follows.
 - i. In an election year, delivery by councillors of their declarations of acceptance of office.
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees.
 - iii. Appointment of any new committees if any, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them.
 - iv. Review of representation on Council working parties or work with external bodies individual councillor special informal responsibilities and arrangements for reporting back.
 - v. In a year of elections, if a Council's period of eligibility to exercise The General Power of Competence expired the day before the annual meeting, to review and make arrangements to reaffirm eligibility.
 - vi. Draft programme of Council Business and agreeing meeting times and dates for the municipal year ahead.

3 Proper Officer

- a The Council's Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time or (ii) such other employee appointed by the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer during the Proper Officer's absence. The Proper Officer and the employee appointed to act as such during the Proper Officer's absence shall fulfil the duties assigned to the Proper Officer in standing orders.
- b The Council's Proper Officer shall do the following.
- i. Upon the Council having first resolved that service of summons on councillors confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda for a meeting by delivery or post at their residences at least 3 clear days before a meeting is not expedient electronically serve on councillors a summons confirming the time, date, venue and the agenda of a meeting of the Council and a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.
 - ii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - iii. Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) below, include in the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least (3) clear days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it.
 - iv. **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office, in accordance with standing order [3(b)i] OR [3(b)ii] above.**
 - v. Make available for inspection the minutes of meetings.
 - vi. **Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
 - vii. **Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from councillors.**
 - viii. Retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests and any changes to it and keep copies of the same available for inspection.
 - ix. Keep proper records required before and after meetings;
 - x. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the Council's procedures relating to the same.
 - xi. Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
 - xii. Manage the organisation, storage of and access to information held by the Council in paper and electronic form.
 - xiii. Arrange for legal deeds to be signed by 2 councillors and witnessed (*See also model standing orders 14(a) and (b).*)
 - xiv. Arrange for the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
 - xv. Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority on an electronic spreadsheet for such purpose;
 - xvi. Refer a planning application received by the Council to the [Chairman or in his absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council] within 2 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.
 - xvii. Shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security is used on the councils' computer.
 - xviii. **Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - xix. Action or undertake activity or responsibilities instructed by resolution or contained in standing orders.

4 Motions requiring written notice

- a In accordance with standing order 3(b)(ii) above, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is included in the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Council's Proper Officer at least (7) clear days before the next meeting.
- b The Proper Officer may, before including a motion in the agenda received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- c If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 4(a) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer in clear and certain language at least (5) clear days before the meeting.
- d If the wording or nature of a proposed motion is considered unlawful or improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included or rejected in the agenda.
- e Having consulted the Chairman or councillors pursuant to standing order 4(d) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- f Notice of every motion received in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be numbered in the order received and shall be entered in a book, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.
- g Every motion rejected in accordance with the Council's standing orders shall be duly recorded with a note by the Proper Officer giving reasons for its rejection in a book for that purpose, which shall be open to inspection by all councillors.
- h Every motion and resolution shall relate to the Council's statutory functions, powers and lawful obligations or shall relate to an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

5 Motions not requiring written notice

- a Motions in respect of the following matters may be moved without written notice.
 - i. To appoint a person to preside at a meeting.
 - ii. To approve the absences of councillors.
 - iii. To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - iv. To correct an inaccuracy in the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - v. To dispose of business, if any, remaining from the last meeting.
 - vi. To alter the order of business on the agenda for reasons of urgency or expedience.
 - vii. To proceed to the next business on the agenda.
 - viii. To close or adjourn debate.
 - ix. To refer by formal delegation a matter to a committee or to a sub-committee or an employee.
 - x. To appoint a committee or sub-committee or any councillors (including substitutes) thereto.
 - xi. To receive nominations to a committee or sub-committee.
 - xii. To dissolve a committee or sub-committee.
 - xiii. To note the minutes of a meeting of a committee or sub-committee.
 - xiv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by a committee or a sub-committee or an employee.
 - xv. To consider a report and/or recommendations made by an employee, professional

- advisor, expert or consultant.
 - xvi. To authorise legal deeds to be signed by two councillors and witnessed.
(See *standing orders 14(a) and (b) below.*)
 - xvii. To authorise the payment of monies up to (£ 300).
 - xviii. To amend a motion relevant to the original or substantive motion under consideration which shall not have the effect of nullifying it.
 - xix. To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - xx. To exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest.
 - xxi. To silence or exclude from the meeting a Councillor or a member of the public for disorderly conduct.
 - xxii. To give the consent of the Council if such consent is required by standing orders.
 - xxiii. To suspend any standing order except those which are mandatory by law.**
 - xxiv. To adjourn the meeting.
 - xxv. To appoint representatives to outside bodies and to make arrangements for those representatives to report back the activities of outside bodies.
 - xxvi. To answer questions from councillors not requiring a decision.
- b If a motion falls within the terms of reference of a committee or sub-committee or within the delegated powers conferred on an employee, a referral of the same may be made to such committee or sub-committee or employee provided that the Chairman may direct for it to be dealt with at the present meeting for reasons of urgency or expedience.

6 Rules of debate

- a Motions included in an agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the Chairman's direction for reasons of expedience.
- b Subject to standing orders 4(a)–(e) above, a motion shall not be considered unless it has been proposed and seconded.
- c Subject to standing order 3(b) (ii) above, a motion included in an agenda not moved by the councillor who tabled it, may be treated as withdrawn.
- d A motion to amend an original or substantive motion shall not be considered unless proper notice has been given after the original or substantive motion has been seconded and notice of such amendment, shall, if required by the Chairman, be reduced to writing and handed to the Chairman who shall determine the order in which they are considered.
- e A Councillor may move amendments to his own motion. If a motion has already been seconded, an amendment to it shall be with the consent of the seconder.
- f Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
 - i. to leave out words;
 - ii. to add words;
 - iii. to leave out words and add other words.
- g A proposed or carried amendment to a motion shall not have the effect of rescinding the original or substantive motion under consideration.
- h Only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman. No further amendment to a motion shall be moved until the previous amendment has been disposed of.
- i Subject to Standing Order 6(h) above, one or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman considers this expedient but shall be voted upon separately.
- j Pursuant to standing order 6(h) above, the number of amendments to an original or substantive motion, which may be moved by a councillor, is limited to one.
- k If an amendment is not carried, other amendments shall be moved in the order directed by

the Chairman.

- l If an amendment is carried, the original motion, as amended, shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved.
- m The mover of a motion or the mover of an amendment shall have a right of reply, not exceeding (3) minutes.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply in respect of the substantive motion at the very end of debate and immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Subject to standing orders 6(m) and (n) above, a councillor may not speak further in respect of any one motion except to speak once on an amendment moved by another councillor or to make a point of order or to give a personal explanation.
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his decision shall be final.
- r With the consent of the seconder and/or of the meeting, a motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer. A councillor shall not speak upon the said motion or amendment unless permission for the withdrawal of the motion or amendment has been refused.
- s Subject to standing order 6(o) above, when a councillor's 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 silent or for him 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;
 - ix. to suspend any standing order, except those which are mandatory.
- t In respect of standing order 6(s) (iv) above, the Chairman shall first be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated before it is seconded and put to the vote. The Chairman shall call upon the mover of the motion under debate to exercise or waive his right of reply and shall put the motion to the vote after that right has been exercised or waived. The adjournment of a debate or of the meeting shall not prejudice the mover's right of reply at the resumption.

7 Code of conduct (England)

See also standing orders 1(d)–(i) above

- a **All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.**
- b All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within 6 months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- c Members or co-opted members with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or prejudicial pecuniary interest must leave the room whilst any discussion or voting takes place.

8 Questions

- a A councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided (7) clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

9 Minutes

- a If a copy of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting has been circulated to councillors no later than the day of service of the summons to attend the scheduled meeting they shall be taken as read.
- b No discussion of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting shall take place except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be raised in accordance with standing order 5(a) (iv) above.
- c Minutes, including any amendment to correct their accuracy, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the majority of the () and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, any previous draft minutes or recordings of the meeting shall be destroyed.

10 Disorderly conduct

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly.
- b If, in the opinion of the Chairman, there has been a breach of standing order 10(a) above, the Chairman shall express that opinion and thereafter any councillor (including the Chairman) may move that the person be silenced or excluded from the meeting, and the motion, if seconded, shall be put forthwith and without discussion.
- c If a resolution made in accordance with standing order 10(b) above, is disobeyed, the Chairman may take such further steps as may reasonably be necessary to enforce it

and/or he may adjourn the meeting.

11 Rescission of previous resolutions

- a A resolution (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least (3) members of the Council, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee, sub committee, working party or the Chairman.
- b When a special motion or any other motion moved pursuant to standing order 11(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

12 Voting on appointments

- a Where more than 2 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. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.

13 Expenditure

- a Any expenditure incurred by the Council shall be in accordance with the Council's financial regulations.
- b **The Council's financial regulations shall be reviewed once a year.**
- c **The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.**

14 Execution and sealing of legal deeds

See also standing order 5(a)(xvi) above

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 14(a) above, any two members of the Council, 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.)

15 Committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. may permit committees to determine the dates of their meetings;
 - iii. shall appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee (unless the appointment of non-councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;
 - iv. may appoint substitute councillors to a committee whose role is to replace ordinary

- councillors at a meeting of a committee if ordinary councillors of the committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer (5) clear days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- v. an ordinary member of a committee who has been replaced at a meeting by a substitute member (in accordance with standing order 15(a)(iv) above) shall not be permitted to participate in debate or vote on business at that meeting and may only speak during any public participation session during the meeting;
 - vi. the chairman and vice chairman of the Council shall be ex officio members of every committee and if both attend the Chairman shall if he/she desires chair the meeting and if only the vice-chairman attends he/she shall if he/she desires chair the meeting.*
 - vii. may in accordance with standing orders, dissolve a committee at any time.

16 Sub-committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a Unless there is a Council resolution to the contrary, every committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by resolution of the committee. Sub-Committees shall report all matters back for decision by the Committee or recommendation to the Council by the Committee.

17 Extraordinary meetings

See also standing order 1 above

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 7 days of having been requested to do so by two councillors, those two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or sub-committee at any time.
- d If the Chairman of a committee (or a sub-committee) does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within (7) days of having been requested by to do so by (2) councillors, those (2) councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee). The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by (2) councillors.

18 Advisory committees

See also standing order 1 above

- a The Council may appoint advisory committees and working parties comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b Advisory committees, working parties and any sub-committees may consist wholly of persons who are non-councillors.
- c Advisory committees, working parties and any sub-committees are not required to hold public meetings but shall have no delegated powers and must report back to a public meeting unless Paragraph "1 c" is invoked.

19 Accounts and Financial Statement

- a All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which shall be reviewed at least annually.
- b The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the each quarter and the balances held at the end of a quarter. This statement should include a comparison with the budget for the financial year. A Financial Statement prepared on the appropriate accounting basis (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The Statement of Accounts of the Council (which is subject to external audit), including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to Council for formal approval before 30 June.

20 Estimates/precepts

- a **The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year** at its meeting before the end of January.
- b Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than December.

21 Canvassing of and recommendations by councillors

- a Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from such an appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- c This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

22 Inspection of documents

- a Subject to standing orders to the contrary or in respect of matters which are confidential, a councillor may, for the purpose of his official duties (but not otherwise), inspect any document in the possession of the Council or a committee or a sub-committee, and request a copy for the same purpose. The minutes of meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees shall be available for inspection by councillors.

23 Unauthorised activities

- a Unless authorised by a resolution, no individual councillor shall in the name or on behalf of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee:
 - i. **inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or**
 - ii. **issue orders, instructions or directions.**

24 Confidential business

- a Councillors shall not disclose information given in confidence or which they believe, or ought to be aware is of a confidential nature to any person that has no legitimate right to the information.
- b A councillor in breach of the provisions of standing order 24(a) above may be removed from a committee or a sub-committee by a resolution of the Council.

25 The General Power of Competence

- a Before exercising the General Power, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- b The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 25 (a) above was made and expires on the day before the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections following which it must re-confirm its eligibility at that Annual Meeting.
- c If the Council does not reconfirm its eligibility as referred to in 25 (b) above the Council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the General Power which was not completed before the expiry of the Council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 25(b) e.

25 Matters affecting council employees

- a If a meeting considers any matter personal to a Council employee, it shall not be considered until the Council or any committee has decided whether or not the press and public shall be excluded pursuant to standing order 1(c) above.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior employee shall notify the Chairman of the Council or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman of any absence occasioned by illness or urgency and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.
- c The Chairman of the Council or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and/or appraisal of the employee's job title and shall keep a written record of it. The review and/or appraisal shall be reported back and shall be subject to approval by resolution by the Council.
- d Staff grievance matters shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's agreed Grievance Procedure which shall be kept under review.
- e Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of Council employees shall keep written records of all meetings relating to their performance, and capabilities, grievance and disciplinary matters.
- f The Council shall keep written records relating to employees secure. All paper records

shall be secured under lock and electronic records shall be password protected.

- g Records documenting reasons for an employee's absence due to ill health or details of a medical condition shall be made available only to those persons with responsibility for the same.
- h Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to employee records referred to in standing orders 26(g) and (h) above if so justified.
- i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 26(g) and (h) above shall be provided only to (the Clerk) and the Chairman of the Council or other Member in accordance with the requirements of any agreed employment policies.

26 Freedom of Information Act 2000

- a All requests for information held by the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Chairman of the Council. The said Chairman shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 including exercising the powers of the Proper Officer in respect of Freedom of Information requests set out under standing order 3(b) (x) above.

27 Relations with the press/media

- a All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

28 Liaison 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 councillors of the District and County Council representing its electoral ward.
- b Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter sent to the District or County shall be sent to the District or County councillor representing its electoral ward.

29 Financial matters

- 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 accounting records and systems of internal control;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the Internal Auditor 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;
 - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 30(b) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where the contract has an estimated value of less than £60,000.
- b **Any proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the**

execution of works with an estimated value in excess of [£60,000] shall be procured on the basis of a formal tender as summarised in standing order 11 Contracts below.

- c Any formal tender process shall comprise the following steps:
 - i. a public notice of intention to place a contract to be placed in a local newspaper;
 - ii. a specification of the goods, materials, services and the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - iii. tenders are to be sent, in a sealed marked envelope, to the Proper Officer by a stated date and time;
 - iv. tenders submitted are to be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the Proper Officer and at least one member of the Council;
 - v. tenders are then to be assessed and reported to the appropriate meeting of Council or Committee.
- d Neither the Council, nor any committee, is bound to accept the lowest tender, estimate or quote.
- e Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £138,893 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No.5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with EU procurement rules.

30 Allegations of breaches of the code of conduct

- a On receipt of a notification that there has been an alleged breach of the code of conduct the Proper Officer shall refer it to the Council.
- b Where the notification relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of that fact, who, upon receipt of such notification, shall nominate a person to assume the duties of the Proper Officer set out in the remainder of this standing order, who shall continue to act in respect of that matter as such until the complaint is resolved.
- c Where a notification relates to a complaint made by an employee (not being the Proper Officer) the Proper Officer shall ensure that the employee in question does not deal with any aspect of the complaint.
- d The subject matter of notifications shall be confidential and, insofar as it is possible to do so by law, the Council (including the Proper Officer and the Chairman) shall take the steps set out below, together with other steps considered necessary, to maintain confidentiality.
 - i. Draft the summonses and agendas in such a way that the identity and subject matter of the complaint are not disclosed.
 - ii. Ensure that any background papers containing the information set out in standing order 31(a) above are not made public.
 - iii. Ensure that the public and press are excluded from meetings as appropriate.
 - iv. Ensure that the minutes of meetings preserve confidentiality.
 - v. Consider any liaison that may be required with the person or body with statutory responsibility for the investigation of the matter.
- e Standing order 30(d) above should not be taken to prohibit the Council (whether through the Proper Officer or the Chairman) from disclosing information to members and officers of the Council or to other persons where such disclosure is necessary to deal with the complaint or is required by law.
- f The Council shall have the power to:

- i. seek documentary and other evidence from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
 - ii. seek and share information relevant to the complaint;
 - iii. grant the member involved a financial indemnity in respect of legal costs, which shall be in accordance with the law and subject to approval by a meeting of the full Council.
- g. References in standing order 31 to a notification shall be taken to refer to a communication of any kind which relates to a breach or an alleged breach of the code of conduct by a councillor.

31 Variation, revocation and suspension of standing orders

- a. Any or every part of the standing orders, except those which are mandatory by law, may be suspended by resolution in relation to any specific item of business.
- b. A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, not mandatory by law, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice whereof bears the names of as least (2) councillors.

32 Standing orders to be given to councillors

- a. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor upon delivery of his declaration of acceptance of office.
- b. The Chairman's decision as to the application of standing orders at meetings shall be final.
- c. A councillor's failure to observe standing orders more than 3 times in one meeting may result in him being excluded from the meeting in accordance with standing orders.

PART THREE: DELEGATED POWERS

1 The Council

All powers are reserved to the Council as a whole except as hereinafter set out.

2 Delegated to the Clerk

- (a) The power to obtain quotations for goods and services in accordance with financial regulations provided the potential value does not exceed the threshold for the seeking of formal tenders.
- (b) The power to incur expenditure of up to £300 subject to reporting the exercise of the power to the next Council Meeting in order to effect emergency repairs or to renew anti-virus software or to maintain essential stocks of paper and computer consumables (whether or not there is specific budgetary provision) or to take advantage of time limited opportunities to obtain advantageous prices.
- (c) The power to respond to routine correspondence or consultations where factual information only is required.
- (d) (i) The power to make minor corrections to the Constitution and any other Council policy or procedural documents to amend obvious errors or to revise such documents to ensure consistency with the law subject to such amendments being brought to the attention of the Council at the next full document review.
- (d) (ii) The power to take any other action designed to ensure that the Council operates within the law subject to such actions being brought to the attention of the Council at the next meeting.
- (d) (iii) The power to make any document amendments designed to ensure that such documents agree with the relevant paragraphs in the Constitution subject to such amendments being brought to the attention of the Council at the next full review of the relevant document.
- (e) The power to apply for grant aid in respect of any expenditure approved by the Council or in the Council's budgets.
- (f) The power to approve a dispensation relating to a disclosable pecuniary interest upon receipt of a request in writing by the councillor or co-opted member to the Proper Officer where not to do so would result in the business of the meeting being impeded.
- (g) That in accordance with §101 of the Local Government Act 1972, in exceptional circumstances the clerk is empowered to take any decision that would normally be taken by the council. Such a decision may only be taken:
where there would be a significant loss, either financial or of opportunity, that would be detrimental to the community were the decision not taken until the next scheduled meeting of the council; AND
following consultation with and seeking guidance from at least one member, preferably the chairman or vice-chairman in that order; AND
if the decision entails new expenditure by the council, that no expenditure be committed that exceeds 20% of the council's reserves.
The decision and circumstances shall be reported to the next available meeting of the council."

3 Delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman

- (i) The power to vire sums between budget sub- headings subject to these being reported to members on a quarterly basis.

4 Delegated to the Clerk in consultation with all available members responsible for Town & Country Planning agenda items.

- (i) The power to determine and submit comments on planning applications where the chairman or vice chairman declines to call a special meeting in cases where the deadline for comments falls before the next ordinary meeting.”

5 Delegated to the Village Hall Committee

a) The power to:

- (i) In the absence of a chairman or vice chairman agreed by the council elect a chairman at the relevant meeting where they are absent.
- (ii) Make decisions on any matters related to the making of policies, procedures and regulations for the proper management of the village hall subject to any comments of the Responsible Finance Officer in respect of financial procedures.
- (iii) Appoint staff or volunteers to run the village hall provided there is sufficient budget and make any virements from approved budgets to secure this.
- (iv) Make capital and revenue spending decisions from approved village hall budgets in accordance with financial regulations.
- (v) Take and refuse bookings.
- (vi) Delegate Committee decisions to the Clerk or village hall staff members.
- (vii) Assign responsibilities for undertaking unpaid non-committee-decision-making activities to any member of the Village Hall Committee.

b) The power to make recommendations to the Council with respect to:

- (i) The setting or revision of village hall budget estimates in accordance with financial regulations.
- (ii) The setting of fees and charges.
- (iii) Arrangements for securing the tenure of the Village Hall
- (iv) Any other matters relating to the village hall not covered by delegated powers 5(a) above.

6 Delegated by the Council to the Clerk

Dealing with future urgent expenditure items with respect to the new village hall up to a limit of £2,500.

7 Delegated by the Village Hall Committee to the Clerk

a) In consultation with the Chairman or failing that the Vice-Chairman of the Committee

- (i) Purchases of services, equipment and sundries within budget of any number of individual items, services or bulk orders not exceeding £3,000 per item.
- (ii) Amendment and updating of the Terms and Conditions document provided that this does not involve changes of policy.
- (iii) Agreeing variations from approved terms and conditions and fees and determining the amount of damages to be retained or charged in respect of individual hire agreements.

b) In consultation with the person undertaking the role or deputising for the role of Bookings Manager.

- (i) Accepting or refusing hall bookings subject to the exercise of such powers being reported to the next ordinary meeting for information.

PART FOUR: FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These financial regulations are designed to demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly. The RFO, acting under the policy direction of the Council, shall administer the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices. The RFO shall determine on behalf of the council its accounting records, and accounting control systems. The RFO shall ensure that the accounting control systems are observed and that the accounting records of the council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.3 The RFO shall produce financial management information quarterly as required by the council.
- 1.4 At least once a year, prior to approving the annual return, the council shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.5 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations shall mean the Regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force.
- 1.6 In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in Governance and Accountability in local Councils in England and Wales – a Practitioners' Guide which is published jointly by NALC and SLCC and updated from time to time.

2. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET)

- 2.1 Each Committee (if any) shall formulate and submit proposals to the Council in respect of revenue and capital including the use of reserves and sources of funding for the following financial year not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the year shall be prepared each year by the RFO in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.
- 2.3 The Council shall review the budget not later than the end of January each year and shall fix the Precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.
- 2.4 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.
- 2.5 The Council shall consider the need for and shall have regard to a three year forecast of Revenue and Capital Receipts and Payments which may be prepared at the same time as the annual Budget.

3 BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate.
- 3.3 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against

that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter.

- 3.4 The Clerk may take any action having financial implications as set out in Part Three of the Constitution (Delegated Powers) or delegated to the Clerk by resolution of the Council.
- 3.5 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the council.
- 3.6 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 3.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.2 The RFO shall complete the annual financial statements of the Council, including the council's annual return, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The RFO shall complete the Accounts of the Council and submit any financial returns to the timescales, standards and formats required by statute.
- 4.4 The RFO shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.5 The Internal Auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the council in accordance with proper practices. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report in respect of each financial year. In order to demonstrate objectivity and independence, the internal auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 4.6 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any Notices and statements of account required by statute.
- 4.7 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from an Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be regularly reviewed for efficiency.
- 5.2 A schedule of the payments required, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting, shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to Council. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council and shown in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4, shall be signed by two members of Council.
- 5.4 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 Certain payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.

- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy him/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetic accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The Clerk shall take all steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council Meeting or in accordance with delegated powers.
- 6.4 In addition to any powers delegated to the Clerk in Part Three of the Constitution, if a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the Clerk may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Council.
- 6.5 The Council will **not** maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk or RFO (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- 6.6 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.7 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by a bank signatory are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.8 If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing a signatory approved the payment.
- 6.9 Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.
- 6.10 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or duly delegated committee.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed by Council.
- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.
- 7.3 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally Salaries) may be made by Bacs payments provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

8 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.2 The council shall consider the need for an Investment Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Policy shall be reviewed at least annually.
- 8.3 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.4 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The terms and conditions of borrowings shall be reviewed at least annually.
- 8.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9 INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3 All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimus provisions in Regulation 11 (l) below.
- 10.4 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11 CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- (a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage, telephone and broadband services;
 - (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - (v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council);
 - (vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding [£60,000] in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list¹.
- (c) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (d) Such 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. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. 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.
- (e) 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.
- (f) If fewer than three tenders are received for contracts above [£60,000] or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall contain a statement to the effect of Standing Orders 21 (a), (b) and (c).
- (h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than [£60,000] in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); except where the value is below £100 where at least one oral quotation or estimate will suffice and where greater than £100 and not exceeding £1,000 the Clerk or RFO shall obtain at least one written quotation or estimate or prior verification of the price via Internet search or catalogue.
 - (i) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
 - (j) **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in Standing order 11b is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the council to advertise the Contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other**

¹ The appropriate approved list referred to in paragraph 11.1 (b) shall be a list drawn up by the Clerk and approved by Council but shall be based on the list maintained by the District Council (if any) for such works.

Means it uses to advertise the opportunity.

- (k) A public contract regulates by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with An estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract Or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract (or other thresholds Determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) shall comply with the relevant Procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contract Finders Website and in OJEU.**
- (l) A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking Water, transport services or postal services to the public; or the provision of a Port or airport, or the exploration for or extraction of gas oil or solid fuel with an Estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract, or In excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other Specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the Relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016.**

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

13 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1 The Clerk shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment if any.
- 13.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the 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.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £50.
- 14.3 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15 INSURANCE

- 15.1 Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 15.2 The RFO will maintain an awareness of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.]
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 Where appropriate Members will notify the RFO of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, who shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

16 CHARITIES

- 16.1 Where the Council is sole trustee of a Charitable body the RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity, the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

18 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.