

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 2026



INTRODUCTION

The Standing Orders are based on the 2025 Update issued by NALC

The Model Standing Orders have been amended to reflect the operational processes of this Council.

Amendments predominantly arise from this Council substituting Working Groups, Working Parties and Review Groups to replace Committees and sub-committees.

Standing orders in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements and have not been varied from the Model Standing Orders.

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1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.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

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

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the Chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if

seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda or local matters.
- f Members of the Public may make representations on behalf of Organisations concerning which they are an Office Holder.
- g Representations may be made on behalf of other individuals, naming that individual, providing the Member of the Public has delivered to the Clerk, prior to the Meeting, documents evidencing that the individual has requested the representation be read out on their behalf. Any such reading out of representations must be included in the three minutes permitted to each Member of the Public present.
- h Parish Councillors may make representations in Public Time as a Member of the Public. Such representations will be delivered from the Public Area and the Minutes will not identify them by name or position in line with all other comments from the Public Area.
- i The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall be 10 minutes unless directed by the

Chair of the meeting.

- j Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- k In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- l A person shall raise his/her hand when requesting to speak.
- m A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his/her comments to the Chair of the meeting.
- n Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- o Subject to standing order 3(p), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- p A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- q The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- r Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his/her absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- s The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside.**
- t Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- u The Chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

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

- v **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
 - w The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
 - vii. the resolutions made.
 - x **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her right to participate and vote on that matter.**
 - y **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
 - z **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
 - aa A meeting shall not exceed 2.5 hours but may be exception, be proposed by the Chair of the meeting for approval by the Councillors present.
- 4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**
- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
 - b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
 - c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory**

committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.

d The Council may appoint Working Groups or Working Parties or Review Groups as may be necessary (see 4e, 4f and 4g),

e. **Working Groups**

This Council processes its day-to-day business through Working Groups.

Each Group is headed by a Lead Councillor and members. Terms of Reference and members shall be proposed by the Chair and approved by the Council.

A Working Group may include non-councillors unless it is a Working Group which reviews and makes recommendations related to the finances of the council.

The function of Working Groups includes but is not limited to:

- i. Formulation of policy proposals within strategic goals already agreed by the Council
- ii. Implementation planning and delivery of projects
- iii. Preparing invitations to tender, recommending contracts and monitoring of let contracts
- iv. Scrutinising planning applications

Working groups do not:

- v. hold budget
- vi. have any powers to authorise expenditure
- vii. reach any decisions

Working Groups **must:**

- viii. refer all matters for decision to the Council

The Lead Councillor for each Working Group shall act as Chair and determine the frequency of meetings, organise such meetings and produce a report of the proceedings of each meeting for the Council at the interval determined in their Terms of Reference.

Working Group meetings are not subject to Section 3. The quorum for a Working Group shall be no less than one-half of its members.

Working Groups need not meet in public or produce formal minutes and may convene via electronic means.

f. **Working Parties**

The Council may periodically establish Working Parties to address specific matters of interest to the Parish.

The function of a Working Party is to develop strategic proposals for Council decision.

The Council will appoint a Councillor or invite a non-Councillor to **initially** Chair a Working Party and identify appropriate members for a Working Party. Once established, a Working Party may, with the approval of the Council, elect its own Chair and co-opt members as needed.

Terms of Reference, quoracy, remit and scope as defined by a resolution of the Council shall apply to all Working Parties. Budget may be allocated at the discretion of the Council and the Parish Clerk shall be the budget holder.

Working Party meetings are not subject to Section 3.

This will include:

- i. Reporting of progress in a style described by the Council, at intervals to be determined
- ii. Submitting of recommendations to the Council
- iii. Powers to co-opt Parishioners or experts with the approval of the Council
- iv. With the approval of the Council, making applications for grants to external bodies for funding to support their work
- v. Proposing amendments to the Terms of Reference and Remit to meet changing circumstances which must be approved by the Council.

This will specifically exclude:

- vi. Deciding matters reserved to the Council

Working Parties will be expected to submit a final report to the Council with recommendations for action. Decision on adoption of recommendations will be taken by the Council.

Working Parties need not meet in public or produce formal minutes and may convene via electronic means.

g. Review Groups

The Council may periodically establish Review Groups to test the efficacy, efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of Council policies and plans.

The Council will appoint a Councillor or invite a non-Councillor to **initially** Chair a Review Group and identify appropriate members for a Review Party. Once established, a Review Group may, with the approval of the Council, elect its own Chair and co-opt members as needed. Terms of Reference, quoracy, remit and scope, as defined by a resolution of the Council shall apply to all Review Groups. Budget may be allocated at the discretion of the Council and the Parish Clerk shall be the budget holder.

This will include:

- i. Reporting of progress in a form described by the Council, at intervals to be determined
- ii. Submitting of recommendations to the Council
- iii. Powers to co-opt Parishioners or experts with the approval of the Council
- iv. Making applications for grants to external bodies with the approval of the Council
- v. Proposing amendments to the Terms of Reference and Remit to meet

changing circumstances which must be approved by the Council.

This will specifically exclude:

- vi. Deciding matters reserved to the Council

Review Groups examining issues that have a final outcome in this Parish, will be expected to submit a final report to the Council with recommendations for action. Decision on adoption of recommendations will be taken by the Council. Where issues under review, are subject to external examination, the accepted external procedure shall apply

Review Groups need not meet in public or produce formal minutes and may convene via electronic means.

Review Group meetings are not subject to Section 3.

5 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of his/her acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
- ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
- iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meetings of Working Groups;
- iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by any Working Groups;
- v. Review of membership and leadership of Working Groups, staff and other local authorities at the next available Council meeting;
- vi. Review of the terms of reference for Working Groups at the next available Council meeting;
- vii. Appointment of members to existing Working Groups at the next available Council meeting;
- viii. Appointment of any new Working Group at the next available Council meeting in accordance with standing order 4;
- ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
- xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all

insurable risks;

- xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
- xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The Chair of a Working Group may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Working Group at any time.
- d If the Chair of a Working Group does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the Working Group any 3 members of the Working Group may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Working Group.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 5 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled

by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chair of the meeting.

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received. The Proper Officer may at his/her discretion vary the numbering to group matters together.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

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

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

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

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

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

- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g., the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings

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

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

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

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

- iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a **Upon notification by the Principal Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be the Parish Clerk or other person nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

- b The Proper Officer shall:

- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council**

- **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of the full council

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received
- iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is

one);

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

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the RFO when the RFO is absent for a prolonged unplanned period. As there are no other members of staff, arrangements will be made for an RFO from a neighbouring Parish Council to act as RFO for this Council on a temporary basis.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:

- i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and
- which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
 - e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- d. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chair or, if he is not available, the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.
- c. The Chair or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of [the member of staff's job title]. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Council.
- d. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the

Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the Chair of the Council or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair of the Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.

- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by [the member of staff's job title] relates to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council this shall be communicated to another member of the Council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.** These requests will be responded to in printed form with a charge of 10p per sheet.
- b **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Below is not an exclusive list. See also standing order 11.

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**

- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 5 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.

- d The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.
- e Reviews of Standing Orders shall be conducted annually and circulated 3 clear days before the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

27. Public Consultations

- a. The decision to survey or consult with the public for opinions, on proposals or the case for changes must be resolved by the Council prior to any consultation or survey document being issued.
- b. When there is a good reason to do so, such as a change in circumstances, anomalies needing correction or additional information emerged that needs to be included, the Chair may at his/her discretion and in exceptional circumstances, suspend any consultation, until a full discussion is conducted at the next Council meeting.

28. Matters Reserved for the Council

- a. Any issue considered potentially contentious or damaging to the reputation of the Council must be reported to the Chair or in his/her absence the Vice Chair and such matters must be discussed and resolved by the Council at a meeting where Standing Order 3d will apply.
- b. Changes to Council policies, Standing Orders, Standing Financial Instructions, Code of Conduct, Schemes of Delegation shall only be decided upon by the Council.
- c. On recommendation of the Chair, changes to remuneration of staff or changes to Terms and Conditions, where Standing Order 3d will apply.
- d. Formal reports from District and County Councillors.
- e. Reports from Working Groups, Working Parties and Review Groups.
- f. Receiving petitions from the public.
- g. Matters resolved by the Council to return to the Council at a later date.

Document control

Version and date	Adopted
2024	Adopted at Full Council meeting 7 March 2024
2025	Adopted at Full Council meeting 6 March 2025
2025	Adopted at Full Council meeting 1 May 2025
2026	Adopted at Full Council meeting 5 March 2026



STANDING FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

These regulations are based on the Model Financial Regulations template produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in March 2025. The template is a model for councils to use to develop their own regulations, suitable for the size and activities of the council. Bold text indicates legal requirements which cannot change or suspend.

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by Council at its meeting held on 5th March 2026.

1. General

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

- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
 - **approving accounting statements;**
 - **approving an annual governance statement;**
 - **borrowing;**
 - **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
 - **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**
- 1.7. The council shall determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.2. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk register covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.** This review of the effectiveness of its system of internal controls is undertaken by the review of the Standing Financial Regulations which detail the system of internal controls.
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
 - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
 - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
 - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
 - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
 - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair (or a cheque signatory) shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council. Alternatively, each months Bank Reconciliation will be included in the Working Papers submitted to Council for scrutiny by the Council and will be voted on.

- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and

- has no involvement in the management or control of the council

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than December prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Finance Working Group and the Council.

4.3. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

4.4. The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

4.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4.6. After the ends of months 4 and 8 of the Financial Year a rebudgeting exercise shall be completed and approved by the full Parish Council in session.

- 4.7. 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 and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, "material" shall be in excess of £250.00 or 15% of the budget.
- 4.8. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by the Council.
- 4.9. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.10. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.11. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February**

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.13) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £30,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall obtain 3 quotations.

- 5.9. Where the value is between £1,000 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. Contracts for the purchase of Capital items above £4,000 should contain a retention of 2.5% unless approved by the Council.
- 5.12. **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.13. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.14. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.15. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.16. In cases where expenditure is required for the safety of the public or proper functioning of the Council the RFO may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the his/her judgement it is necessary to carry out subject to a monthly limit of £1,500.00 excluding VAT. The RFO shall, where practicable, seek the prior approval of the Chair for such expenditure and report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter with the matter included in the minutes of the next Council meeting.
- 5.17. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.18. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.19. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council.

- 6.2. All payments other than transfers between the Councils Bank Accounts require both an inputter and an authoriser, this is achieved by setting up the internet banking in a way that requires two individuals to send a payment and in the bank mandate requiring two signatures to sign a cheque, set up a Direct Debit or set up a Standing Order.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents approved expenditure.
- 6.4. Additionally, all invoices above £5,000 relating to Capital items must be approved for payment by both the Councillor Project Lead and one other Councillor.
- 6.5. In respect of grants the Council will approve all expenditure.
- 6.6. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 6.7. Members or RFO may claim for reimbursement of costs incurred on behalf of the Council. Councillors or the RFO should seek pre-approval of amounts above £50.
- 6.8. Any changes to the bank details of a supplier shall be verified by the RFO and the change and the documentation received to justify that change shall be stored with the first invoice with the new details and brought to the attention of the Member authorising payments.
- 6.9. No petty cash is held.

7. Electronic payments

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

- 7.7. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Council meeting.
- 7.8. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.9. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment shall be signed by two authorised signatories.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,500.00 unless authorised by Council in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The council will not maintain any form of cash float.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations.

11.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

11.7. Before employing interim staff, with a cost of above £1,000, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made quarterly where the claim exceeds £100 and at least annually at the end of the financial year.

13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

14.1. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

15.1. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.

16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law.

16.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Charities

- 18.1. Where the council is sole managing 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.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

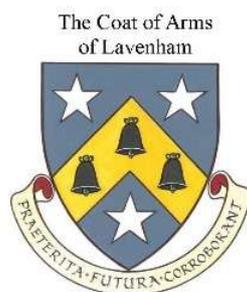
- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations at least annually. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Document control

Version and date	Adopted
2024	Adopted at Full Council meeting 7 March 2024
2025	Adopted at Full Council meeting 6 March 2025
2025	Adopted at Full Council meeting 3 April 2025
2026	Adopted at Full Council meeting 5 March 2026

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.



LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

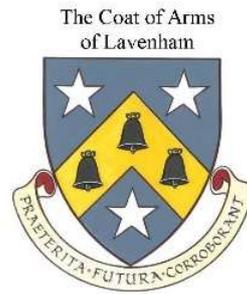
Authority to Commit Resources

	Who can authorise	Limits
Contracts for Supply of all Goods and Services SFI 5.1	Public Supply Contracts regulations apply Tenders: to be approved by The Council before issue Award of Contract: The Council	Over £30,000.00
Contracts for Supply of all Goods and Services SFI 5.8	The Council, three quotes	£3,000.00 to £30,000.00. Best value must still be applied
Contracts for Supply of all Goods and Services SFI 5.9	The Council, strive three estimates	£1,000.00 to £3,000.00. Best value must still be applied
Variations of any kind to agreed Contracts	The Council	
Costs exceeding agreed Contract limits SFI 14.1	Report to the Council	If 5% above agreed contract
Additional external audit services SFI 11.1 (a) (v)	Was: The RFO Was: The RFO and Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council Deleted: No longer in NALC template	Up to £500.00 Over £500.00
Variations of any other kind to agreed Contracts	The Council	
Virements (ie changes to budgets which do not effect total budget)	Was: The RFO and Chair Was: The Council Deleted: Council does not do vire. Council does reforecasts	Up to £1500.00 Above £1500.00
Grants SFI 5.8	The Council	All

Sale of Tangible Fixed Assets	The Council	Was: All Now Above £500
Any other purchases not covered above	The RFO and Chair The Council	Up to £1500.00 Above £1500.00

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LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

AGREED SCHEME OF DELEGATION MARCH 2026

1. The Local Government Act 1972, section 101, gives a parish council power to delegate decisions to an Executive Committee or the Parish Clerk, being the council's Proper Officer. Hereafter for the purposes of this scheme, referred to as the Proper Officer for administrative functions and the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) where budgeted expenditure is authorised or in exceptional circumstances, where expenditure commitments need to be made. This Council does not operate a Committee structure.
2. All Council decisions must be agreed at a properly constituted meeting of the Council unless the decision is delegated to the Proper Officer.
3. The Proper Officer is the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council and lead the administration of all the Council's activities. Therefore, the only individual who can have functions delegated to them is the Proper Officer. The Proper Officer may be supported in the normal business of the Council by the Chair and/or Vice Chair. The functions delegated to the Proper Officer are contained in the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, both of which are based on the NALC model.
4. No individual Parish Councillor or group of Councillors can make decisions or issue instructions on behalf of the Council, other than those agreed at Parish Council full meetings.
5. Delegation of decisions to the Proper Officer for routine and urgent business is a necessity to ensure the smooth running of the Council.
6. Decisions taken shall be reported to Councillors by email and will be reported to the next meeting of the Council so that they can be recorded in the minutes.
7. Where reference is made to Chair in this document, in all instances where the Chair is unavailable or is an interested party, the Vice-Chair shall be substituted or, where the Vice Chair is unavailable or where there is no Vice Chair, by a member of the Council voted for by the majority of the remaining members.
8. This scheme of delegation is subject to being implemented in accordance with the law, the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations March 2025.

Delegation of Functions

Function or Circumstance	Example	Delegated Action(s)
Routine Communications	General enquiries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge receipt within 5 days and full response within 20 working days.
Urgent Business including but not limited to enquiries from Parishioners, the Press, Local Authority Officers or Councillors or Member of Parliament	<p>Any report of matters that the Council must respond to within 24 hours or if a weekend or public holiday with 48 hours.</p> <p>A non-administrative matter which requires more prompt action than being included on the Agenda for decision at the next meeting of Council.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Urgent decisions required between scheduled meetings are delegated to the Proper Officer in consultation with the Council's Chair.</u> 2. <u>Wherever possible members will be given notice of any urgent decision the Proper Office needs to take</u>, in order for them to make their views known (notwithstanding the Proper Officer in consultation with the Chair can take any action they deem as extremely urgent immediately). 3. In the absence of the Proper Officer or in the event he/she is an interested party, he/she will be substituted by an appropriate substitute from outside the Council, ideally a Parish Clerk from within the same district. 4. The Council's Chair will arrange for a substitute in conjunction with the substantive postholder (where possible) and with guidance from SALC. 5. <u>In the event of a tie between members, the Chair has the casting vote if s/he is available</u>, if not the tied member with the longest service as a Parish Councillor will substitute the Chair. 6. Decisions made under this delegation will be reported to and minuted at the next Council meeting. 7. <u>Under this delegation, where appropriate, the Proper Officer may conclude that an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called to deal with the urgent matter.</u> 8. When it is not possible for members to discuss issues at a scheduled Council meeting or an extraordinary meeting, members may confer (in person, by telephone, email or other electronic means) and the outcome of this discussion will be conveyed to the Clerk by email for a decision to be made.

<p>Consultations (Planning)</p>	<p>To notify the Council of all planning application consultations received.</p> <p>In the event of the consultation end-date falling before the date of the next council meeting, take action as described.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request an extension of response timescale from Babergh District Council. 2. Inform the Chair and Lead Councillor for Planning 3. If an extension of response timescale is denied, discuss with members and either call an extraordinary meeting to agree the Council's response or collate members' individual comments by email and take the majority view to respond to the Planning Authority. 4. Review Babergh District Council website to ensure that all Planning Applications and Requests for Discharge of Conditions have been forwarded to the Chair and Lead Councillor for Planning. 5. Maintain a register of Conditions requested by Council.
<p>Managing Contracts</p>	<p>Monitor delivery of routine contracts e.g., grass-cutting and be the first point of contact for all contractors appointed by the Council</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resolve interruptions in service in liaison with Contractors 2. Report significant and repeat problems to the Council 3. Review contract performance annually and report to the Council
<p>Elections</p>	<p>Casual Vacancies</p> <p>Ordinary Elections</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To notify the Returning Officer of all casual vacancies arising in the membership of the Council as required by statute and to liaise with them regarding any statutory notices, electoral arrangements and co-option. 2. To provide guidance and support to candidates in accessing information and completion of nomination forms
<p>Emergency Response</p>	<p>In the event of a major incident</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make yourself known to the Emergency Services in situ 2. Contact the Chair and Vice-Chair and trigger a cascade of information and tasks to Councillors as directed by Emergency Services

Meetings	To ensure Council meetings are arranged in accordance with Standing Orders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To arrange and call meetings of the Council, as and when expedient in consultation with the Council's Chair. 2. To follow government guidance on holding meetings in times of national emergency.
Finance	To act as the Responsible Financial Officer referred to hereafter as the RFO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To manage the finances of the Council as set out in the Standing Financial Regulations. 2. To seek authorisation from the Council for all expenditure not covered in this Scheme of Delegation. Attachment 1 sets out the detail about who can commit resources, authorise invoices and the applicable financial limits. 3. To maintain adequate insurance cover for the Council's activities and assets. 4. If required, and dependent on banking arrangements, to manage timely transfer of funds between the Council's bank accounts in order to maintain adequate cash-flow and in accordance with the Council's investment policy. 5. To manage income flow and expenditure in line with the annual budget agreed by the Council. 6. To pay providers upon receipt of invoice, for goods and services supplied under Contract and previously agreed by the Council. 7. To arrange purchase of and re-imburement for sundry items within the budget headings agreed by the Council. 8. To provide a monthly report to the Council, of expenditure against budget. 9. To provide a monthly report of grant requests or extraordinary expenditure for decision by the Council. 10. To provide a draft budget to the Council for the forthcoming year and forecast for future years. 11. The RFO shall ensure that the Clerk and three Councillors each have unique passwords to the Banking Software.

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