GRAVENHURST PARISH COUNCIL

At an Ordinary Meeting of Gravenhurst Parish Council held at the Village Hall, Gravenhurst on Thursday, 21st March 2024

Present:	Councillors:	Lockey (Chair) and Simkins
	Ward Councillor:	None
	Clerk:	A Marabese
	Public:	0 members of the public

Meeting started at 8:00pm.

7955. Apologies for absence.
Ward Councillor Stephenson and Councillors Cooper, Robertson, Sibley and Thaneja provided apologies for absence that were received and accepted.
Due to apologies quorate for the meeting could not be achieved. Councillors Lockey and Simkins agreed to go through the meeting agenda and make recommendations for approval at the next Parish Council meeting.

7956. Chair's announcements:
   a. A notice on openness and transparency of the meeting was read out.
   b. Resolution to extend the meeting duration beyond 2 hours to complete necessary business of the Council was not required.
   c. Other information.
      i. The Chair attended the Grapevine AGM earlier in the week. There was a good turnout with discussion focussing on funding of the magazine going forward.

7957. Members interests
   a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on agenda items, requests for dispensations and grant any requests for dispensations.
   None.

PUBLIC SESSION

7958. The Chair did not suspend Standing Orders as no Ward Councillor or members of the public were present at the meeting.
   a. Ward Councillor Report (sent via email to the Clerk)
      i. CBC Budget - The group of Independent Councillors running CBC got their budget passed in February. CBC's share of Council Tax will increase by 4.99% from April.
      ii. £55/year for garden waste collections - Despite best efforts to protect free garden waste collections, changes have been approved and are being rushed out for April. Many councillors wanted this idea to be scrapped entirely, and proposed a compromise one-year delay so time could be spent designing a solution that everyone could get behind. These councillors were out voted. Councillor Stephenson wishes to hold CBC to account for their final plans and implementation, and on any negative consequences of concern (e.g. fly-tipping, bonfires, tidy tip capacity, using the black bin to dispose of garden waste), so please do contact him with any issues as things develop.
      iii. Some good news from the budget - A campaign to protect 37 bus services throughout the county was a success, with plans to axe subsidies dropped [for now]. And, having secured widespread support in Council, £10m has now been set-aside to back our NHS. CBC isn't responsible for healthcare, but it

needs to show leadership on what is a top priority issue for our rural communities.
iv. Greenwoods is REFUSED! - CBC refused planning permission on 5th March, citing concerns about harm to; the green belt, heritage assets, landscapes (including views to/from the Chilterns), the character of our area, ecology, prime agricultural land, and more. The developers may still appeal, so we need to stay alert and ready to fight to protect our countryside at every twist and turn. But for now, a big thank you to everyone who has been involved.

b. Village organisations
   i. None present.
c. Questions and issues raised by the public with council members:
   i. None

MINUTES

7959. Adoption of minutes of the Statutory Meeting of Gravenhurst Parish Council held on Thursday 15th February 2024.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to propose that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th February 2024 having been previously circulated, are taken as read and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIUONS AND LEGAL

7960. To re-approve procedures:
a. GPC Risk Management and Review of Internal Controls v1.0.
b. GPC Freedom of the Parish v1.0.
c. GPC Schedule of Delegation v1.0.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to re-approve GPC Risk Management and Review of Internal Controls v1.0, GPC Freedom of the Parish v1.0 and GPC Schedule of Delegation v1.0.

7961. To agree on arrangements for Parish Annual meeting on 18th April 2024, 7:30pm – Village Hall.
The Clerk reported that she had sent 'Save the Date' invitation to all known possible attendees and suggested that the agenda be as per previous years. As per the GPC Schedule of Delegation the Clerk and Chair have delegated powers to make such Civic arrangements as are necessary.

7962. To confirm 2024/2025 Parish Council meeting dates.
The Clerk confirmed the following meeting dates for the 2024/2025 year:

2024 / 2025 MEETING DATES	
Meeting Dates	**Notes**
No Parish Council Meeting in April	
18 April 2024	Annual Parish Meeting
09 May 2024	Also Annual Statutory Meeting
20 June 2024	
25 July 2024	
No Parish Council Meeting in August	
19 September 2023	
17 October 2024	
28 November 2024	
No Parish Council Meeting in December	
16 January 2025	
20 February 2025	
20 March 2025	

7963. To confirm attendance at Beds Police Priority Setting meeting on 10th April 2024, 6:30pm Beds Police HQ, and GPC priorities.
The Clerk advised that as per previous meetings she would attend on behalf of the Council.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

7964. Planning applications to consider
a. None

7965. Update on ne CBC Local Plan.
Both The Clerk and Councillor Lockey had attended the Local Plan workshops organised by CBC and the presentation slides form the meeting have been circulated to all councillors. It was important to note that this was not a Local Plan review but the launch of a new Local Plan that was currently expected to go live in 2028. A call for sites is scheduled for end of 2024 / beginning of 2025.

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

7966. Recreation Ground - To receive update on all matters concerning the Recreation Ground and consider any actions.
a. Update on Recreation Ground Improvement Project.
The Clerk will be placing orders shortly.
b. To review Recreation Ground Inspection Reports and schedule for those inspecting.
   - Councillor Cooper has advised the Clerk that he has conducted regular inspections and will complete inspections until the next GPC meeting in May.
c. To approve hire of Recreation ground for Gravenhurst Gallop on 6th July 2024.
The Clerk reported that a booking form has been received and approved. Hire specific docs will be provided prior to event. The Gallop would like to get a TV licence for the screening of football. The event will be free during the day to all however the evening event is £5 per person and sold on first come first serve basis as per previous years.
d. Update on CPRE Hedgerow Heros project.
Our project at the Recreation Ground in Gravenhurst has been put forward for funding as part of the CPRE Hedgerow Heroes campaign. This includes approximately 500 meters of hedgerow planting/gapping up around the Recreation Ground and the new hedge across / by the play area. The allotment area will be included in the 2nd year of the project. CPRE will also be applying for other funds from different sources and all project work will be subject to them gaining funding. The first year of the project will run from April/May 2024 and CPRE will look at planting in September/October (subject to the weather). CPRE will fund the plants and will work with GPC to engage local volunteers to help with the planting, CPRE are also aiming to get some Bedfordshire based businesses to work with us on some team days to assist with planting, particularly on the larger sites. The ongoing care and maintenance of the plants will be GPC responsibility.
e. All other items.
None

7967. Update on repair of GPC mower.
A mobile welder will be repairing the mower week commencing 8th April. The Clerk has advised our grass cutting contractors that if they do not believe the mower is safe to use until welding has been completed that they should not mow the Recreation Ground.

7968. Allotments

a. Update on installation of water on allotments including request for water troughs.
The Clerk reported that the connection has been completed by Anglian Water and works now pending are backfilling of trenches installation of the access chamber to the onsite stop cock. Trough have been requested for installation and the Clerk will request additional s106 funding to cover these costs.
b. To approve works to boundary fence with 36A High Street and allotments by proprietor of 36A Hight Street.
As viewed from the Allotment's on 22nd February by the Clerk, Mr Beer and the owner of 36a High Street, it was seen that the boundary fence between the two plots of land (36a/GPC) has two sections that need repair. This is the responsibly of 36a. It is the intention of the owners of 36a, to make repairs to the boundary fence, reinforce the height difference between the two plots, with Gabion's filled with Granite Rocks and to follow the original boundary in a straight line as shown on the Land Registry Document in photograph attached. Any working from the Allotment land would be supervised and Mr Stuart Beer informed before worked commenced.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to approve works to boundary fence with 36A high Street and allotments by proprietor of 36A High Street.
c. Other updates.
The Clerk advised that a tenant has been issues with a notice to quit and that she and Mr Beer are dealing with documentation for new plot holders.

HIGHWAYS AND LIGHTING

7969. To receive update on any Highways matters and consider any actions.
The Clerk advised that Councillor Stephenson has not yet provided an update on his meeting with CBC Highways officers regarding the village highways issues. The Clerk was asked to push for an update on

- Resolution to uneven pavement at junction of Spring Hill and Barton Road,
- Vehicles mounting kerbs to park in front gardens with no dropped kerb,

CEMETERY

7970. Update on Cemetery inspection actions and St Marys Churchyard mapping.
No further progress made. The Clerk has received various enquiries regarding burials and monuments for the PC Cemetery.

FINANCE MATTERS

7971. To approve purchase orders.
None.

7972. To appoint new Internal Auditor.
Mr Ray Foster has retired and Clerk has obtained a quotation from a local auditor working for other local parish councils. Cost of the Internal Audit would be £115.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to appoint Mrs Leena Bains as GPC Internal Auditor.

7973. To approve bank reconciliations to 29th February 2024
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to approve bank statements and bank reconciliations to 29th February 2024, and that they be signed by councillors at the meeting.

7974. To approve payments to be made.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended that payments, as presented to Council, be approved for payment.

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Payments authorised prior to agenda and meeting			
BACS674	Printerland.co.uk	New GPC printer	£644.40
Direct Debits			
DD65A	SSE	Street Lighting (taken 27/02/24)	£36.68
DD65B	SSE	Street Lighting (taken 27/02/24)	£8.65
DD66A	SSE	Street Lighting (taken 04/03/24)	£36.68
DD66B	SSE	Street Lighting (taken 04/03/24)	£8.65
Payments requested with distribution of agenda			
BACS675	Frank Redman and Sons	Mower Maintenance	£144.00
BACS676	A Marabese	Salary (Paid 21.03.2024)	[redacted]
BACS677	HMRC	Qtr 4 PAYE	£326.40
BACS678	Standard Life	Clerk pension	[redacted]
BACS679	Unity Trust Bank	Qtr 4 bank charges	£18.00

7975. To delegate approval of payment of invoices until next GPC meeting in May 2024.
Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Simkins. Recommended to approve the delegation of payment of invoices until next GPC meeting in May 2024 to Clerk and Chair / Vice Chair.

MEETING CLOSE

7976. Close of meeting
There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 8:45pm

Certified a true copy of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st March 2024.

Signed ……………………………..
(Chairperson)

Date ………………………………

Report on:	GPC Agenda Item Discussion Points
Provided by:	Clerk – Alessandra Marabese
Date of Meeting:	9th May 2024

INFORMATION FOR PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA DISCUSSION / DECISION ITEMS

7983. Previous minutes
The meeting held on 21/03/24 was not quorate and therefore no resolutions could be made. However, councillors at the meeting did make recommendations that can be approved by resolution.

7984. Councillor Areas of Responsibility
Current responsibilities are:
a. Personnel Committee – Councillors Lockey, Robertson and Simpkins.
b. Planning – Councillors Sibley and Thaneja.
c. Recreation Ground – Councillors Cooper, Lockey and Robertson.
d. Allotments – Councillors Cooper and Lockey.
e. Cemetery - Councillors Cooper and Lockey.
f. IT – None.
g. Highways and Lighting – Councillor Sibley.
h. Finance – Councillors Robertson and Thaneja.

7985. Procedures
a. Dispensation v2.0 – Only format changed in line with all other policies and procedures. #
b. Standing Orders v1.5 – Contract values altered as per NALC LTN 87
c. Financial Regs v1.4 – Contract values altered as per NALC LTN 87
d. Personnel Committee TOR's v1.1 – no changes

7988.CBC new Local Transport Plan (LTP)
CBC are interested in knowing what the Council thinks (have provided comments form), in particular on the following points:

- Our views on possible areas of focus for the LTP, which are:
  - Reducing the damaging environmental effects of transport;
  - Improving access to jobs and other opportunities associated with new housing and businesses;
  - Investing in transport to create better places to live and work;
  - Providing extra walking, cycling and public transport capacity; and
  - Making transport safer;
- Our thoughts on how we can best address these while taking your local area's needs into account;
  - Our perception of the issues our LTP should deal with, and any preferred solutions;
  - Any proposals for schemes/interventions that you believe should be included;
  - The views of our residents who the general online approach may not suit; and
  - Any relevant data or evidence we may hold.

7990. ROW Diversion
No objections raised to the proposals.

7991. Local Settlement Audit
Clerk has prepared response that requires review by councillors. See separate report

7996. Clophill Road build out
We have received complaints from residents reading parking of vehicles adjacent to the build out on Clophill Road. CBC Parking Enforcement have advised the following: *If there aren't any restrictions in place, then unfortunately the Civil Enforcement Team are unable to issue a PCN. If there aren't any restrictions around the 'build-out', you can request for parking restrictions to be installed, such as yellow lines, by putting in a request to Highways via www.fixmystreet.com This report will go directly to the Highways Department who are the department responsible for the design, installation and maintenance of traffic/safety schemes and signs/lines. Highways will then investigate your report and provide an update on your request. If the vehicles are parking in a way which is dangerous and/or causing an obstruction, I would advise you to report these vehicles to the police via 101 as they have the powers to deal with vehicles parked dangerously and/or causing an obstruction.*

7997. Campton Road Island
A&B have confirmed that they can add this to their village grass cutting schedule at circa £50 per cut (3 cuts per year).

8007. Insurance
Clerk requested quotations from BHIB / Clear (current insurer0, Zurich, Endsleigh and CAS.
Endsleigh have declined to quote as the insurance companies they use are all related to Aviva and Zurich who are both insuring us already. They have declined to offer any requotes for this reason.
Quotations from others as follows:
- BHIB – 3 year LTA = £610.90
- Zurich – 3 year LTA = £1,249.35
- CAS – not yet responded

Draft Budget Detail 2024/2025 - 11/01/2024

NOM Code	EXPENDITURE	2023-2024 Budget	2023-2024 Actual	2024-2025 Budget	Detail Budget	Amends	Notes
100	**Staff Costs**						
101	Clerk salary	6,395.06	6,651.00	6,851.88	6,851.88		Based on 6hr /week
102	HMRC PAYE (DNU)	-	-				
103	Employer NI	-	-				
104	Pension	639.51	665.10	685.19	685.19		10% of salary
	TOTAL	**7,034.57**	**7,316.10**	**7,537.07**	**7,537.07**		
200	**Administration**						
201	Expenses (telephone, internet, working from home, insurance, mileage)				36.00		MPC Telephone £3 per month
					150.00		Landline and internet (£3 & £9.5mth)
					108.00		Working from Home
		494.00	252.00	494.00	200.00		Mileage
202	Office Stationery, printing, equipment, postage, expenses etc.				25.00		Stationery
					100.00		Printing
					10.00		Postage
					-	50.00	Book binding
		235.00	-	200.00	65.00		Misc
203	IT equiptment /costs						
					60.00		MS 365
					100.00	-	Easy PC accounts - Not required
		200.00	586.99	220.00	60.00		McAffee expires on 18/08/2023
204	Auditors fees (internal & external)				100.00	15.00	Internal Auditor - additional cost
		310.00	300.00	310.00	210.00		External Auditor
205	Training	500.00	-	350.00	350.00		Training
206	Hall hire	300.00	178.20	272.16	272.16	16.00	£21.60+5% increase - Actually £24 per hire
207	Council insurance	800.00	606.81	1,000.00	1,000.00	- 375.00	New 3YR LTA required
208	Legal fees	500.00	-	250.00	250.00		
209	Subscriptions - BATPC	136.00	132.00	139.88	139.88		number of electors x 0.2847 x 3%
210	Subscriptions - ICO	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00		no change to previosu years
211	DPO for data protection		-	-	-		Not required
212	Subscriptions - SLCC	66.00	63.92	67.12	67.12		5% on previous year
213	Subscriptions - CPRE	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00		
214	Website costs				260.00		Website/email renewal due in March 2024. 3YR renewal on Premium at £260
		310.00	-	370.00	110.00		Gov.uk due in March 2024
215	Election costs	-	61.09	-	-		None expected
216	Noticeboard**		-	-	-		?
217	Marketing (banners)		-	-	-		
218	Logo		-	-	-		
219	Bank Charges	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.00		£18 per quarter
	TOTAL	**3,998.00**	**2,328.01**	**3,820.15**	**3,820.15**	**(294.00)**	
300	**Allotments**						
301	Membership of NSALG	-	-	-	-		
302	Maintenance	2,500.00	-		700.00		New noticeboard
				2,200.00	1,500.00		General Maintenance
303	Water	5,000.00	3,350.95	500.00	500.00		
	TOTAL	**2,500.00**	**3,350.95**	**2,700.00**	**2,700.00**	**-**	
400	**Highways & Lighting**						
401	Grass cutting	4,950.00	4,148.35	4,703.00	4,703.00	357.00	Based on 2023 costs + 10%
402	Other environment maintenance	2,000.00	725.00	1,000.00	1,000.00		
403	Lighting energy	550.00	515.39	732.00	732.00		Contract until Sept 2024 - New contract £77 per month
404	Lighting maintenance	370.00	330.00	330.00	330.00		Same as last year
405	Lighting repalcement / renewal	-	-	-	-		All complete
	Christmas Lights		-				
	TOTAL	**7,870.00**	**5,718.74**	**6,765.00**	**6,765.00**	**357.00**	
500	**Grants and Section 137**						
501	Poppy Wreath	50.00	100.00	50.00	50.00		
502	Grapevine	750.00	1,500.00	750.00	750.00		
503	Coronation	1,500.00	1,674.72	-	-		
504	Wanderbus	-	-	350.00	350.00		
505	P3 New Years Day Walk	-	-	100.00	100.00		
506		-	-	-	-		
507	Others	1,250.00	350.00	2,000.00	2,000.00		
	TOTAL	**3,550.00**	**3,624.72**	**3,250.00**	**3,250.00**	**-**	

600	**Village Hall and Recreational Ground**						
601	Car Park Rent		-	-	-		
602	Tractor expenses (insurance & fuel, tyres)	450.00	372.80		150.00		Insurance
					75.00		Fuel
				275.00	50.00	300.00	Service and Maintenance
603	Play equiptment (new and maintenance)	5,000.00	6,250.00	5,000.00	5,000.00		£5k into reserves
604	Village Hall	-	-	-	-		
605	Recreational Ground	2,000.00	950.00		3,000.00		Hedges and tree maintenance
				5,100.00	2,100.00		3x2mt flat pack container
606	Playground & Gym Inspections	100.00	45.95	50.55	50.55		
607	Gym & Sports Equiptment (new and maintenance)	5,500.00	32.33	2,500.00	2,500.00		£2k new equipment and £500 in maintenance
	TOTAL	**13,050.00**	**7,651.08**	**12,925.55**	**12,925.55**	**300.00**	
700	**Projects**						
701	Defibrilator	300.00	-	430.00	430.00		New battery and pads
702	SpeedWatch	-	-	-	-		
703	RMF Speed reduction	-	-	4,550.00	4,550.00		2 x VAS at £2250 each + £25 add bracket
704	Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	-	-		
706	Neighbourhood Plan - Grant funding	-	-	-	-		
705	Gallop	-	-	-	-		
	TOTAL	**300.00**	**-**	**4,980.00**	**4,980.00**	**-**	
800	**Cemetery**						
801	Water	80.00	79.79	85.00	85.00		
802	Repairs & Maintenance	1,000.00	341.14	1,000.00	1,000.00		
803	ICCM membership	100.00	95.00	100.00	100.00		
	TOTAL	**1,180.00**	**515.93**	**1,185.00**	**1,185.00**	**-**	
900	VAT Paid	5,213.00	3,443.60	5,810.11	5,510.11	144.40	
	SUB TOTAL OF ALL EXPENDITURE	**44,695.57**	**33,949.13**	**48,972.87**	**48,672.87**	**507.40**	
950	**Plus 5% contingency fund**	**1,974.13**		**2,158.14**	**2,158.14**		
	GROSS TOTAL BUDGETTED EXPENDITURE	**46,669.70**	33,949.13	**51,131.01**	**50,831.01**	**507.40**	
2000	**INCOME**						
2001	Precept	31,763.00	31,763.00	34,989.00			321 tax base at £109
2002	Donations	-	95.33	-			
2003	Allotments - Annual charge/Deposits	132.00	156.00	132.00			
2004	Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	-			
2005	Grass cutting	-	-	-			
2006	S106	-	12,000.00	-			
2007	VAT Refund	5,213.00	-	3,443.60			
2008	Cemetery	180.00	4,417.84	200.00			
2009	Bank Interest	100.00	936.42	500.00			
2010	Recreation Committee		-	-			
2100	Other		7,000.00	-			
2705	Gallop		-	-			
	TOTAL	**37,388.00**	**56,368.59**	**39,264.60**			
	Income less expenditure		**22,419.46**	**(11,866.41)**			
	Earmarked Reserves - at 31/03/24		21,970.06	21,970.06			
	General Reserves - at 31/03/24		45,026.60	45,026.60			
	TOTAL in banks accounts		**66,996.66**	**66,996.66**			

GPC

Earmarked Reserves Current and Proposed

Earmarked Reserve	Nom Code	2023/2024			2024/2025		
		Start	Movement	Finish	Start	Movement	Finish
Recreation Ground	605	£ 126.40	£ -	£ 126.40	£ 126.40	£ -	£ 126.40
RMF Speed Reduction	703	£ 5,000.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00	-£ 4,550.00	£ 450.00
Election Costs	215	£ 800.00	-£ 61.09	£ 738.91	£ 738.91	£ -	£ 738.91
IT Equiptment	203	£ 450.00	-£ 450.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Play equipment	603	£ 5,524.75	£ 5,000.00	£ 10,524.75	£ 10,524.75	£ 5,000.00	£ 15,524.75
Allotments	2003	£ 80.00	£ -	£ 80.00	£ 80.00	£ -	£ 80.00
Gym Equipment	607		£ 5,500.00	£ 5,500.00	£ 5,500.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 7,500.00
TOTAL		**£ 11,981.15**	**£ 9,988.91**	**£ 21,970.06**	**£ 21,970.06**	**£ 2,450.00**	**£ 24,420.06**

Assets Register Year on Year

Description	Item	Location	Purchase Date	Payment Ref	2023/2024	2024/2025	Notes	Original Insurance Value	BHIB 2024 insurance values
Tractor	Tractor Masse Ferguson 135	Redman Farm	30/04/2002		£ 6,150.00	£ 6,150.00		Insured separately	Insured separately
War memorials	War Memorial	High Street	2018		£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 13,000.00	£ 36,000.00
War memorials	Timber Tryptch	Methodist Church			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 5,000.00	
Land	Allotment Land	High Street			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		Ignore	Ignore
Land	Cemetery Land	Barton Road			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		Ignore	Ignore
Land	Recreation Ground Land	Recreation Ground	2015		£ 1.00	£ 1.00		Ignore	Ignore
Play equipment	Recreation Ground Play Equipment	Recreation Ground			£ -	£ -		£ 6,000.00	£ 60,000.00
Play equipment	HAGS Roty	Recreation Ground	2020	Won	£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 1,250.00	
Play equipment	Big Rig - Gym	Recreation Ground	27/03/2023	581 & 595	£13,500.00	£13,500.00	Includes Installation and grass tiles	£ 13,500.00	
Play equipment	Monkey Wall	Recreation Ground	16/01/2024		£ 6,250.00	£ 6,250.00		£ 6,250.00	
Gates and Fences	Recreation Ground Tennis Court Fencing	Recreation Ground			£ -	£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 15,000.00
Sports Equipment	2 x Heavy Duty Basketball hoops and backboards	Recreation Ground in MUGA	19/04/2017	157	£ 1,650.00	£ 1,650.00	Includes installation and removal of old stuff	£ 1,650.00	£ 12,000.00
Sports Equipment	21 x 7 Goal Posts				£ 1.00	£ 1.00			
Sports Equiptment	21 x 7 Replacement Football Goal Nets	Recreation Ground Goal Posts	31/10/2022	567A	£ 62.00	£ 62.00		Ignore	Ignore
Street Furniture	31 Street Lamps	Various			£ 30.00	£ 30.00		£ 20,021.00	£ 46,447.00
Street Furniture	2 Benches	Cemetery and Rec. Ground play area			£ 200.00	£ 200.00		£ 739.00	
Street Furniture	1 x Oak Sleeper Bench	Recreation Ground nr gardens	28/09/2017	195	£ 430.00	£ 430.00	Bench + Installation		
Street Furniture	1 x Oak Sleeper Bench	Recreation Ground in play area	10/07/2017	168	£ 430.00	£ 430.00	Bench + Installation		
Street Furniture	2 x Oak Sleeper Bench Plaques	Recreation Ground for above	15/06/2017	167	£ 70.00	£ 70.00		£ 930.00	
Street Furniture	Noticeboard	Recreation Ground	04/12/2018	261	£ 999.00	£ 999.00		£ 1,000.00	
Street Furniture	1 x Oak Sleeper Bench & plaque	Recreation Ground nr MUGA	13/07/2018	232 & 233	£ 586.00	£ 586.00		£ 590.00	
Street Furniture	1 x Oak Sleeper Picnic Table and two oak benches	Recreation Ground in play area	26/11/2018	258 & 286	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00	
Street Furniture	1 x Oak Sleeper Picnic Table and one oak bench and two smaller benches (mobility friendly)	Recreation Ground in play area	20/05/2019	294	£ 1,100.00	£ 1,100.00		£ 1,100.00	
Street Furniture	Wooden bench	Campton Road entrance to village	23/06/1905		£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 500.00	
Street Furniture	Wooden Noticeboard	Cemetery			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 500.00	
Street Furniture	Metal Noticeboard	High Street			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 1,000.00	
Street Furniture	Metal Parking Post	Allotments	01/06/2020	362	£ 165.00	£ 165.00	£100 on top to install	Ignore	
Street Furniture	Metal Parking Post	Recreation Ground	15/02/2021	419	£ 156.00	£ 156.00	£100 on top to install	Ignore	
Street Furniture	2 x Tommy Figures	Village Hall & Shillington Road Triangl	26/07/2021	462	£ 350.00	£ 350.00		£ 350.00	
Street Furniture	Festival of Britain sign	Shillington Road / High Street			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 300.00	
Street Furniture	Brick built bus stop	High Street	05/05/1905		£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 5,000.00	
Street Furniture	Defibrilator	Village Hall			£ 1.00	£ 1.00		£ 4,000.00	
IT Equipment	Asus VIVO K553 15/512 Laptop	Clerks Home	28/01/2022	507B	£ 745.00	£ 745.00		£ 750.00	£ 12,500.00
IT Equipment	Logitech Keyboard and Mouse	Clerks Home	28/01/2022	507B	£ 190.00	£ 190.00		£ 190.00	
IT Equipment	Xerox VersaLink C600DNW	Clerks Home	19/02/2024	674	£ 537.00	£ 537.00		£ 540.00	
Cemetery Equipmer	Strapping Machine and parts	MPC Allotment Container	17/03/2023	593B	£ 71.66	£ 71.66		Ignore	Ignore
Allotments	Water Standpipe c/w 25 MDPE inlet c/w drain tap (SPED20x25DT)	Allotments	13/10/2023	645	£ 680.00	£ 680.00		£ 680.00	£ 680.00

TOTAL	£ 35,365	£ 35,365
	£ 7,469.00	£ -

02/05/2024

Gravenhurst Parish Council

Year End - Internal Audit report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Internal audit is a key component of the system of internal control. The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a Council's activities are operating effectively.

Executive Summary

The Parish Clerk is the Clerk and the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and has prepared the year end Annual Governance & Accountability Returns (AGAR). There have been no significant changes from the previous year.

A review of the Council's accounting records in respect of the financial year ended 31 March 2024 was reviewed. A sample of transactions were tested and verified to supporting invoices and reconciled to the bank statements. All figures included in the AGAR have been reconciled to supporting working papers maintained by the Clerk.

The Council operates 2 bank accounts with Unity Trust Bank and all year end balances were agreed to the bank statements to ensure the closing balances have been correctly stated.

External audit completed their Annual Audit for 2022/23 and reported that the 30 days inspection period had not been complied with, and the variance analysis did not provide any values.

The Council has good processes in place for approving invoices. Two Councillors check the invoices are valid and confirm by initialling the invoices. All payments are approved at the Council meetings and documented within the monthly Minutes.

I would like to thank the Clerk for her co-operation during the audit.

Leena Bains
29 April 2024

Appendix 1

	Test	Findings	Recommendations
A	Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year	The cash book is prepared by the clerk using an excel spreadsheet and records the receipts and payments that have gone through the bank from 1 April 2023 to the 31 March 2024. Audit tested a sample of Payments from the cash book and agreed them to supporting invoices, and the bank statements. Testing confirmed all payments agreed to supporting invoices which had been checked by the Clerk and two other Councillors and initialled on the actual invoice.	None
B	Council met its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for	The Council have adopted the Financial Regulations in its Council meeting on 15 May 2023. The Standing Orders were adopted in its Council meeting on 15 May 2023. The Code of Conduct was adopted on 23 November 2023. All these policies are available from the Council's website. VAT is separately accounted for and submitted to HMRC annually. The submission of the VAT claims is undertaken online.	None
C	Council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objective and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	**Risk Assessment:** The Council have adopted the Risk Management policy on 21 March 2024. This document details the risks that the Council have identified and includes mitigating controls.	None

		<u>Insurance:</u> The Council's insurance policy schedule confirms the following levels of insurance cover: • Employer's Liability - £10 million • Public Liability - £10 million • Fidelity - £150k	
D	Precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate	**<u>2023/24 Budget</u>** The budget for 2023/24 was approved in January 2023. Evidence was seen by Audit to confirm that the Budget is discussed, analysed and monitored against the actual spend to date. **<u>Precept</u>** The Precept for 2023/24 was £31,763. The first instalment of £15,881.50 was paid in April 2023 and the second instalment was paid in September 2023. This has been agreed by Audit to the Cashbook and the bank statements.	None
E	Expected income was fully received, properly recorded and promptly banked	In addition to the annual precept, the Council receives income from: • Allotments • Burials Total receipts in box 3 was incorrectly stated as £24,066. This needs to be amended to **<u>£24,606</u>** as per the working papers and the year end bank reconciliation. Audit verified a sample of deposits recorded in the cash book to the bank statements. No issues were identified.	**R1:** To amend Box 3' Other Receipts' to £24,606

F	Petty cash	The Council does not use Petty Cash.	None
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were in accordance with the Council's approvals	The Clerk is employed by the Parish Council. Salaries, pension and tax calculations are undertaken using HMRC PAYE tools. This is consistent with previous years.	None
H	Asset register were complete and accurate and properly accounted maintained	A fixed asset register for 2023/24 was agreed to the Accounting statements and reconciled to the amounts recorded with the AGAR in Box 9.	None
I	Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out	Bank reconciliations are undertaken on a monthly basis and presented to Councillors to check and authorise. The Year End bank reconciliation did not initially include the correct opening and closing balances. However this has now been corrected and agrees to the year-end bank statement balances.	None
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis, agreed to cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying record	The accounting statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis. No changes from the previous year.	None
K	Other	The Council's website was reviewed and the Council Minutes have been published and is up to date. The statement of Accounts and the Notice of Public Rights have been published on the Council website under the Accounts section.	None

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices.*
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024.** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024.**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2024** been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

****Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices***, can be downloaded from **www.nalc.gov.uk** or from **www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Gravenhurst Parish Council

www.gravenhurst-pc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✔		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✔		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✔		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✔
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✔		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✔		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✔		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✔		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✔
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✔		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✔		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✔		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✔		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 29/04/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: S L Bains

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: SBains

Date: 29/04/2024

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

Gravenhurst Parish Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed			
	Yes	*No**	*N/A*	*'Yes' means that this authority:*
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✔			*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✔			*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✔			*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✔			*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✔			*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✔			*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✔			*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✔			*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes ✔	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

09/05/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.gravenhurst-pc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Gravenhurst Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	48,028	44,577	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	25,742	31,763	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,663	24,606	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	5,413	7,316	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	26,443	26,633	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	44,577	66,997	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	44,577	66,997	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	27,896	35,365	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✔		*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✔			*The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 09/05/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

09/05/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of | Gravenhurst Parish Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit,** it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/ .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature | SIGNATURE REQUIRED | Date | DD/MM/YYYY

Attachment 3

Confirmation regarding the exercise of public rights

Local Council name: **GRAVENHURST PARISH COUNCIL**

The Council must inform the electorate of an exact 30 working day period during which public rights may be exercised.

The inspection period must commence no later than 1 July 2024 and must include the first 10 working days of July.

The Electors rights must start **EXACTLY** one day after the annual return has been published on your website (or other free to access website used by the Council) with the statutory notice. Publication of the Annual Return must be as soon as practical after the unaudited annual return has been approved by the Parish Council.

Working days are defined as Monday – Friday. They **do not** include Saturdays, Sundays and Bank holidays.

The inspection period commences on: Monday 3rd June 2024

And ends on: Friday 12th July 2024

Signed: Date: 31st May 2024

Position held: CLERK AND RFO

GRAVENHURST

Parish Council

STANDING ORDERS

As adopted at a meeting of Gravenhurst Parish Council on ***9th May 2024***

CONTENTS

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Organisation	Gravenhurst Parish Council
Title	GPC Standing Orders
Creator	Alessandra Marabese - Clerk
Source	Clerk
Approvals	Monday 9th May 2024
Distribution	Internal and External
Filename	GPC Standing Orders v1.6 2024©
Owner	Clerk
Subject	Standards
Protective Marking	None
Review date	Annually

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

Revision No.	Originator of change	Date of change	Change Description
v1.3	Clerk	18/05/20	Addition of Section 27 (modification allowing virtual meetings prior to 7th May 2021)
V1.4	Clerk	17/05/21	Removal of Section 27 and contracts values updated.
V1.5	Clerk	16/05/22	Financial controls and procurement amended as per NALC Legal Topic Note (LTN) 87
V1.5	Clerk	09/05/24	Financial controls and procurement amended as per NALC Legal Topic Note (LTN) 87

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

1.1. Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chairperson of the meeting.

1.2. A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

1.3. A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chairperson of the meeting as withdrawn.

1.4. If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder at the meeting.

1.5. An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.

1.6. If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

1.7. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chairperson of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chairperson.

1.8. A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

1.9. If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairperson.

1.10. Subject to standing order 1.11 below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairperson of the meeting.

1.11. One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairperson of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

1.12. A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

1.13. The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

1.14. 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 of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

1.15. Unless permitted by the Chairperson of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

- 1.15.1. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
- 1.15.2. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
- 1.15.3. to make a point of order;
- 1.15.4. to give a personal explanation; or
- 1.15.5. in exercise of a right of reply.

1.16. 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 other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.

1.17. A point of order shall be decided by the Chairperson of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

1.18. When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:

1.18.1. to amend the motion;
1.18.2. to proceed to the next business;
1.18.3. to adjourn the debate;
1.18.4. to put the motion to a vote;
1.18.5. ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
1.18.6. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
1.18.7. to exclude the public and press;
1.18.8. to adjourn the meeting; or
1.18.9. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

1.19. Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chairperson 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 their right of reply.

1.20. Excluding motions moved understanding order 1.18 above, 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 Chairperson of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

2.1. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

2.2. If person(s) disregard the request of the Chairperson of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chairperson of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

2.3. If a resolution made under standing order 2.2 above is ignored, the Chairperson of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

(Full Council meetings, Committee meetings, Sub-committee meetings)

3.1. 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.

3.2. 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.

3.3. 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.

3.4. 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.

3.5. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
3.6. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3.5 above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairperson of the meeting.
3.7. Subject to standing order 3.6 above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
3.8. In accordance with standing order 3.5 above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairperson of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
3.9. A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
3.10. A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the Chairperson of the meeting.
3.11. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the Chairperson of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
3.12. Subject to standing order 3.13, 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 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.
3.13. A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.
3.14. 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.
3.15. Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairperson of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairperson of the Council (if any).
3.16. The Chairperson of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairperson, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.
3.17. 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.
3.18. The Chairperson 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 their casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

See standing orders 5.9 and 5.10 below for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairperson of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

3.19. 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 their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
3.20. The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

3.20.1. the time and place of the meeting;
3.20.2. the names of councillors present and absent;
3.20.3. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
3.20.4. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
3.20.5. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
3.20.6. if there was a public participation session; and
3.20.7. the resolutions made.

3.21. 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 their right to participate and vote on that matter.
3.22. 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.
3.23. See standing order 4.4.8 below for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.
3.24. 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.
3.25. A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours except when it is necessary to complete essential business of the Council and councillors present have resolved to extend the meeting finish time either during the meeting or prior.
3.26. A proposed meeting of the Council can be re-scheduled at the discretion of the Clerk and Chair and/or Vice-Chair for reasons such as inclement weather, councillor's unavailability resulting in lack of quorate or any other reasonable overriding circumstance.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

4.1. Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
4.2. The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
4.3. Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
4.4. The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
4.4.1. shall determine their terms of reference;
4.4.2. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
4.4.3. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
4.4.4. shall, subject to standing orders 4.2 and 4.3 above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
4.4.5. may, subject to standing orders 4.2 and 4.3 above, appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the

committee confirm to the Proper Officer 2 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

4.4.6. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chairperson of the standing committee;

4.4.7. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own Chairperson at the first meeting of the committee;

4.4.8. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;

4.4.9. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

4.4.10. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

4.4.11. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and

4.4.12. may dissolve a committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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.

5.3. If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.

5.4. 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.

5.5. The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (if there is one) of the Council.

5.6. The Chairperson of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.

5.7. The Vice-Chairperson of the Council, if any, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairperson of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.

5.8. In an election year, if the current Chairperson of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairperson of the Council has been elected. The current Chairperson of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairperson of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

5.9. In an election year, if the current Chairperson of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairperson of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairperson of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

5.10. Following the election of the Chairperson of the Council and Vice-Chairperson (if any) of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:

5.10.1. In an election year, delivery by the Chairperson 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 Chairperson of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
5.10.2. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
5.10.3. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
5.10.4. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
5.10.5. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
5.10.6. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
5.10.7. Appointment of members to existing committees;
5.10.8. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
5.10.9. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
5.10.10. Review of arrangements, (including legal agreements), with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses;
5.10.11. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
5.10.12. 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;
5.10.13. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
5.10.14. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
5.10.15. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
5.10.16. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
5.10.17. 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)
5.10.18. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
5.10.19. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
5.10.20. Review of the Councils expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
5.10.21. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of full Council.

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

6.1. The Chairperson of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.
6.2. If the Chairperson 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 must be signed by the two councillors.
6.3. The Chairperson of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.

6.4. If the Chairperson of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 members of the committee [and the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

7.1. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

7.2. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7.1 above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

8.1. 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 Chairperson of the meeting.

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

9.1. A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for 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.

9.2. 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 seven clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

9.3. The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9.2 above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

9.4. If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9.2 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 so that it can be understood at least five clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

9.5. If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairperson 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.

9.6. Subject to standing order 9.5 above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

9.7. Motions received shall be recorded in a log for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

9.8. Motions rejected shall be recorded in a log for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

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

10.1. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;

- 10.1.1. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- 10.1.2. to move to a vote;
- 10.1.3. to defer consideration of a motion;
- 10.1.4. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
- 10.1.5. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- 10.1.6. to change the order of business on the agenda;
- 10.1.7. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- 10.1.8. to require a written report;
- 10.1.9. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- 10.1.10. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- 10.1.11. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- 10.1.12. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- 10.1.13. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- 10.1.14. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- 10.1.15. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- 10.1.16. to adjourn the meeting; or
- 10.1.17. to close a meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20

11.1. 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.

11.2. 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).

11.3. 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.

11.4. Councillors, staff the Council’s contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.

12. DRAFT MINUTES

12.1. 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.

12.2. 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 10.1.1 above.

12.3. The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairperson of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

12.4. If the Chairperson 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 Chairperson 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 their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

12.5. 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.

12.6. Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12.5 and 20.1 and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3.20 above.

13.1. All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

13.2. 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.

13.3. 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.

13.4. 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.

13.5. A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.

13.6. A dispensation request shall confirm:

13.6.1. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

13.6.2. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

13.6.3. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

13.6.4. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

13.7. Subject to standing orders 13.4 and 13.6 above, dispensations requests 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.

13.8. A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13.5 above if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:

13.8.1. 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 or

13.8.2. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area or

13.8.3. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

14.1. Upon notification by the Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11 above, report this to the Council.

14.2. Where the notification in standing order 14.1 above relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairperson of Council of this fact, and the Chairperson shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14.4 below.

14.3. The Council may:

14.3.1. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;

14.3.2. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;

14.4. Upon notification by the Unitary 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

15.1. The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

15.2. The Proper Officer shall at least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee and a sub-committee;

15.2.1. serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residence 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

15.2.2. 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 3.2 above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3.3 above for a meeting of a committee.

15.2.2. subject to standing order 9 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least five days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;

15.2.3. convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairperson of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;

15.2.4. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;

15.2.5. receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;

15.2.6. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

15.2.7. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;

15.2.8. assist with ensuring transparency in responding to requests made under current freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation in accordance with and subject to the Council's policies and procedures relating to the same;

15.2.9. liaise, as appropriate, with the Councils Data Protection Officer (if there is one);

15.2.10. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

15.2.11. assist in the organisation, 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 Limitations Act 1980;

15.2.12. arrange for legal deeds to be executed; (see also standing order 23 below)

15.2.13. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with the Council's financial regulations;

15.2.14. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a log for such purpose;

15.2.15. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairperson or in their absence the Vice-Chairperson of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council;

15.2.16. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

15.2.17. 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 below)

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

16.1. The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

17.1. "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England).

17.2. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.

17.3. 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:

- 17.3.1. the Council's receipts and payments for each quarter;
- 17.3.2. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
- 17.3.3. 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.

17.4. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:

- 17.4.1. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
- 17.4.2. 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.

17.5. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

18.1. 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:

- 18.1.1. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
- 18.1.2. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
- 18.1.3. 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;
- 18.1.4. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
- 18.1.5. whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

18.2. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.

18.3. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18.6 is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).

18.4. 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:

18.4.1. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;

18.4.2. 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;

18.4.3. the invitation to tender shall be advertised on the council website and in any other manner that is appropriate;

18.4.4. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;

18.4.5. 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;

18.4.6. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

18.5. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

18.6. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

19.1. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council or the Personnel committee is subject to standing order 11 above.

19.2. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Chairperson of the Council or, if he is not available, the Vice-Chairperson of the Council of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Personnel committee at its next meeting.

19.3. The Chairperson of the Personnel committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairperson of the Personnel committee shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisals shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Personnel committee.

19.4. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff shall contact the Chairperson of the Personnel committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairperson of the Personnel committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Personnel committee.

19.5. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by an employee relates to the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Personnel committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Personnel committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of that member and 2 other councillors.

19.6. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.

19.7. The Council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

19.8. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19.6 and 19.7 above if so justified.

19.9. Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19.6 and 19.7 above shall be provided only to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Personnel committee.

20. RESPONSIBILITES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21

20.1. In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements.

20.2. [If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000] 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

See also standing order 11

21.1. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer

21.2. The Council shall have in place policies and procedures to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.

21.3. The Council shall have in place a written policy for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

21.4. 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.

21.5. The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available from and kept up to date.

21.6. The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS / MEDIA

22.1. 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 15.2.12 and 15.2.17 above.

23.1. A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
23.2. Subject to standing order 23.1 above, 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

24.1. An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
24.2. Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

25.1. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
- 25.1.1. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- 25.1.2. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

26.1. All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
26.2. A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
26.3. The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered their acceptance of office form.
26.4. The decision of the Chairperson of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.