

Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

To all Members of the Council. You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the Parish Council of Whixall to be held on Wednesday 9 November 2022 at Whixall Social Centre which will commence at 7.30pm in order to conduct the following business enclosed on the agenda below. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Signed:

A. Mercer

Date: 3 November 2022

1. Chairman's welcome, announcements and public session

Should a member of the public so require they will be permitted to speak. Public speaking time will be limited to 15 minutes, 3 minutes per speaker

2. Apologies

3. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary or any other interests or requests for dispensations

Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests. Members are reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded that they must declare non-pecuniary interests relating to agenda items

4. To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 12 October 2022

5. Reports

Shropshire Councillors; Parish Councillors and Clerk

6. Parish Matters

- a. Marlot
 - i. to receive an activity report from MCG (circulated)
 - ii. to agree the Marlot Strategy document (circulated)
- b. Update on Senior Citizens Christmas meals
- c. Grass Cutting Contract

7. Planning (to include items received post agenda)

- a) To receive planning applications from Shropshire Council
 - None Received

- b) To note planning decisions made by Shropshire Council

22/02007/FUL	Application under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the retention of timber shed and change of use of part of paddock to domestic garden. 6 Hollinwood, SY13 2NW	Grant Permission
22/02006/VAR	Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant of 20/03691/VAR to allow for amendments to the orientation of the approved dwelling. 6 Hollinwood, SY13 2NW	Grant Permission

8. Parish Council Policies

- a. To receive a report from the Clerk regarding Parish Council policies
- b. To review and approve the following existing policy documents (circulated):
 - i. Grants and donations policy
 - ii. Records management Policy

- iii. Financial Regulations
- iv. Standing Orders
- c. To consider and adopt the following policy documents (circulated):
 - i. Complaints
 - ii. Scheme of Delegation
 - iii. Communications
 - iv. Health & Safety
 - v. Publication Scheme
 - vi. Financial Reserves

9. Finance

- a) Bank reconciliation and balance for information (circulated)
- b) Payment / Invoices
- c) To consider budget options for 2023/24 (report circulated)

Recipient	Reason for Payment	Amount	Ref.	Power of Expenditure
Employee	Salary for October	196.82	39.22	LGA 1972 s112(2)
NEST	Pension Contributions	60.81	40.22DD	LGS(DP)R 1961 s1
Employee	Reimbursement		41.22	LG(FP)A 1963 s5
SALC	CILCA Training	£250.00	42.22	LGA 1972 s.111
No Butts Bin Company	Marlot picnic table and bench	£918.00	43.22	OSA 1906 s9-10
Marlot Cons Group	Fuel for Power Tools	£18.33	44.22	OSA 1906 s9-10
SJF Design & Print	Newsletters	£132.00	47.22	LGA 1972 s112(2)
To be paid in December				
Employee	Salary for November	196.82	45.22	LGA 1972 s112(2)
NEST	Pension Contributions	60.81	46.22DD	LGS(DP)R 1961 s1

10. Items for Next Agenda

To enable Councillors to bring forward items for the 11 January 2023 meeting agenda.

Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 12 October 2022 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chairman); B Harris; M Evans; J Spenser; P Rodenhurst

Shropshire Councillors : E Towers

Clerk: A Roberts

Other Organisations 0

Members of the Public 0

54/22 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Rawlinson; Cllr Howard; Cllr Weedall: Cllr Broomhall (Shropshire Council)

55/22 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

56/22 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Harris that the draft minutes, of the Ordinary meeting of the Council, held on 13 July 2022 were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by all present.

Resolved: The minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 July are an accurate record.

The Chair signed the minutes.

57/22 Reports

- a. Councillors Broomhall and Towers had circulated their report in advance of the meeting
- b. The Clerk reported that the CILCA training has now started

58/22 Parish Matters

- a. The content of the Marlot Activity Report was noted. Cllr. Mercer has produced a document for the working group.
- b. The content of the Hollinwood Green Quarterly Report was noted.
- c. Social Media Policy
Proposed Cllr Mercer; seconded Cllr Evans; agreed all.

Resolved: The Social Media Policy is approved and adopted by the Council and a Parish Council Facebook Page will be set up and managed by the Clerk.

- d. Christmas 2022
Proposed Cllr Spenser; seconded Cllr Rodenhurst

Resolved: The Parish Council will commission the provision and delivery of Christmas lunches to the value of £400 with the strict proviso that they will only be provided to residents of the Parish who are 66 years of age, or older. The supplier will be expected to keep a record of who receives the meals, but will not be asked to share any personal information with the Parish Council.

- e. Donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
Proposed Cllr Mercer; Seconded Cllr Rodenhurst; agreed all.

Resolved: The Parish Council will donate £50 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

- f. Mobile and Broadband Connectivity
Proposed Cllr Harris; Seconded Cllr Evans; Agreed all.

Resolved: The Parish Council will carry out a connectivity survey to provide a fuller picture of issues across the Parish. The results will be published on the Parish Council Website and shared with Shropshire Council.

The Clerk and Cllr Harris will agree a response deadline.

- g. Parish Council Newsletter
Proposed Cllr Evans; Seconded Cllr Mercer; Agreed All

Resolved: The content of the newsletter was approved and will be printed by SJF Design & Print.

- h. Boglife Project – Pete Bowyer (Natural England) provided a written report which was circulated prior to the meeting.

59/22 Planning

- a. To Consider Applications
None received
- b. Planning Decisions Noted

22/03598/FUL	Alterations to existing camping and touring site, provision of additional amenity facilities within an existing building and installation of package treatment plant. Abbey Green Farm, Abbey Green.	Grant Permission
22/00805/FUL	Erection of 2no. local needs dwellings including provision of access, parking and garage. Land East of Rack Lane Garage	Grant Permission
22/03333/FUL	Erection of private use equestrian building and associated works. Plantation House, Canal Side	Grant Permission
22/03799/FUL	Replacement of the existing porch to the front elevation together with raising the roof of part of the house to the rear & the introduction of dormer windows to the front elevation and associated works. Oak Cottage, Church Lane	Withdrawn

60/22 Financial Matters

- a. To receive monthly bank balance record.
The Clerk advised the council of the council's bank balances.

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
30 June 2022	Current Account (Working Budget)	£8,964.43
	Savings Account (Reserves)	£10,582.71
TOTAL		£19,547.14

- b. Society of Local Council Clerks Subscription
Proposed Cllr Evans; Seconded Cllr Spenser; agreed by all

Resolved: The Council will pay the annual SLCC subscription as part of the employment package for any clerk working for Whixall Parish Council. This will be factored into future annual budgets.

c. To resolve to approve outstanding accounts

Orders for the payment of outstanding invoices and all payments approved remotely (under "Power to Spend" LGA1972 s.112(2) and 124(1)). Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all.

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the payment transactions authorised by two authorised councillors.

Recipient	Reason for Payment	Amount	Reference
<u>Paid in August</u>			
Employee	Salary for July	£211.54	25.22
NEST	Pension Contributions	£36.49	26.22 DD
SALC	VAT Training	£30.00	27.22
SALC	Good Councillors Guides	£36.00	28.22
<u>Paid in September</u>			
Employee	Salary for August	£196.82	29.22
NEST	Pension Contributions	£60.81	30.22 DD
SALC	Good Councillors Guides	£30.60	31.22
Employee	Reimbursement	£9.91	32.22
Marlot CG	Reimbursement	£10.14	33.22
<u>To be Paid in October</u>			
Employee	Salary for July	£196.82	34.22
NEST	Pension Contributions	£60.81	35.22 DD
HMRC	PAYE	£328.40*	36.22
SLCC	Annual Membership Fee	£112.00	37.22

d. Options for External Audit

Proposed Cllr Evans; Seconded Cllr Spenser; agreed all

Resolved: The Council will continue with the present external audit arrangement and will not opt out of the SAAA sector led auditor appointment regime.

Scheduled date of next meeting:

9 November 2022 (7.30pm)

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Report 10 to Whixall Parish Council

by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall + Edward Towers – November 2022

Dear All – Please find below our tenth written report as your County Councillors:

We have not had another Full Shropshire Council meeting since Thursday 22nd September 2022, so nothing to report this month. The next one is in the diary for 15th December 2022.

Shropshire Climate Change Stakeholder Group:

ET serves as a member of this group that has been endorsed by SC at its September Full Council meeting. **Its title has now been adjusted to Climate and Carbon Advisory Board.** A further meeting of this Board took place on 20th October when we were notified that the Government has awarded SC one of the largest grants in the country for electric vehicle charging in SC Car Parks (almost £1m). This means that SC can raise the number of charging points across the county from 50 to 270. The locations being proposed are the result of detailed modelling amid the propensity to move to electric vehicles. Two charging areas are being suggested for Wem....in the main car park and the one in Mill Street. They will take 18 – 24 months to install because electrical supplies must be installed as well. We were informed that Car Clubs are being investigated as well.... where individuals cannot afford a charger of their own. Further headline areas mentioned were:

- Electric Refuse Collection vehicles have now been demonstrated in Shrewsbury, but there is still some way to go with these. They currently have a range of 100miles, have 300kW battery power and operate very quietly!
- Local Transport Plan with reference to Public Transport is very high on this agenda. The aspiration is there, but the delivery is still the area of concern.
- Carbon Capture and Storage is being considered at Highway depots and SC are asking for the money for a pilot here to deal the brittle fallen trees for Ash Die-Back along SC Highways. A pyrolysis plant to produce Biochar (powdered charcoal) is being investigated. This material would have then have the benefit of being used to clean up water boost soil performance by helping retain moisture be a binder for concrete and tarmac, etc. Shropshire is in the forefront of looking into this technology.
- There is a detailed study going on in how to use waste heat from Battlefield recycling centre. Various nearby buildings to this plant are being considered here.
- There is an SC solar farm being seriously considered in the Oswestry area which can then be added to by using other low-grade land in SC's ownership. This would then bring into the Council needed revenue.
- A hydrogen plant is being discussed in the Shrewsbury area, but at this stage this is not being classed as 'green' because some of the gas is from non-renewable sources at this stage.
- Financial opportunities for SC were discussed in addition to those already mentioned above, such as Social Housing 'Green' schemes.....that would provide an action plan for our buildings....but these were described as not being 'shovel ready' to share. The matter of Carbon Reduction in SC's entire supply chain (including ICS) was seen as very important in leading the way, but gathering the data ascribing carbon performance, to then enable us to select the ones that have the best effect in Carbon reduction, is a very big 'piece of work' needing a big data company's help. It was emphasised that this is not all about examining 'what SC do' but also 'what SC buy in'. Some of the footprints for these sources may in fact be outside UK control....so presenting some difficult challenges to overcome in this aspiration.
- Finally, environmental performance of new developments was considered. This relates to the work being done on the new SAMDEV 2035 documents. At the moment the process is being examined by the independent Inspector, but an examination of Site Allocations follows this. What is being raised by some of us is the need to embed energy conservation considerations, building materials, active transport as part of the material planning policies when designing and bringing to committee future planning. At present these are just 'add-ons' that may or may not be discussed. There is a call for supplementary planning documents (SPD's) that mean there will be a greater interaction with building regulation systems. Policy documents are described as not very 'agile' in sign-posting a direction of policy, so guidance is needed on how to implement a direction. It will be interesting to see how this call is taken up by others in SC!

Shropshire Local Plan Member Group:

ET attends these meetings of this revived Cross-Party group held via Teams. The latest was on Friday 4th November when the **agenda was to discuss latest draft of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site SPD or Supplementary Planning Document** (that we are seeking to jointly agreed with Telford & Wrekin Officers) was finally agreed by the group. This means that this document can now go to our SC Cabinet on 14th December with a recommendation that it go out to a formal six week public consultation. If Cabinet approves this (and this is also agreed by similar process going on concurrently in Telford and Wrekin) this consultation could now begin in January 2023. You will remember that we wanted to make sure it reflected Shropshire's concerns about the old power station site/developments at Buildwas on land (partly in Shropshire Council's area and part within Telford and Wrekin's) were on equal footing with those of Telford and Wrekin.

The **other matters relating to the emerging SAMDEV 2025-2035 Plan for Shropshire** were just touched on. Matters are still discussing Stage 1 of the process with the Planning Inspectorate, specifically related to nine questions that the Inspector has asked our Planning Officers about related to 'how SC engages with its neighbours'. Written responses are being prepared by officers. Only when this Stage 1 of the Review by the Inspectorate has been completed satisfactorily in their opinion will Stage 2 of the Review that looks into the recommended Site Allocations for development across the County (that is of more direct interest locally to ourselves) be started. It is expected that if all goes to plan that this part of the review will take up a good proportion of 2023.

Shropshire Council Briefing Session:

None have been held this last month.

Cross Party Group to help advise on Draft Submissions to the Boundary Commission.

This is still as reported to you last month. The Cross-Party Group (of which ET is part) has completed and submitted its work. It proposed that there should be no change to a Cabinet style of leadership and that a rise of two members of SC to 76 are needed to help us function efficiently in representing residents where there has been a large increase in population due to demographic changes caused by new house building and employment patterns. We are now awaiting the decisions of the Boundary Commission.

Shropshire Council Training/Development Sessions:

There was a Planning Training Evening meeting for SC Officers, Planning Committee members and substitute members on Monday 17th October. It was an intense 2 hour session on 'Environmental Impact Assessments' led by Nina Pindham from 'No 5 Barristers Chambers'. It dealt with the General Position about EIA's....when and where they can be used, before going on to look at the 8 Key Issues regarding Areas Legal Risk. Then followed a look at the Habitats Directive and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive before concluding with information about the Environment Act/Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. I think you can see from the terminology the lawyers are using these are complex matters, so if any of you would like a copy of more detailed notes from Nina here, then do ask me for these and/or her powerpoint slides.

Public Transport Working Group:

The latest meeting of this group took place on Thursday 27th October for this Cross-Party Group (of which ET is part) under the Chairmanship of the new Portfolio Holder for Transport, Cllr Ian Nellins who has replaced Cllr Cecilia Motley. Following an introduction and welcome from Ian we then were briefed and discussed a whole range of transport issues that affect us in the county. These were:

- Meeting between Shropshire Council Officers & Department for Transport related to our Levelling Up Funding second round competitive bid that totals some £126m that incorporates the first round Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for Shropshire. We are currently waiting for news about this from the DfT to know if we have been successful this time around, but there has been a very positive reception to the idea we are putting forward...the meeting with DfT running over by 40 or more minutes!
- South Shrewsbury Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) – Zone 1 Update. This is a pilot scheme for this new way of operating a bus service from within SC itself.
- Shrewsbury Connect – Scope & Plans. This relates to the planning that needs to go on in the light of the LUF2 Bid reported to you last month.
- Central Government £2.00 Fare Cap – Proposals that have been made by central government for a 3 month trial of this new scheme in 2023 for commercial operators to use to attract passengers back on to buses were discussed ...regarding its possible success of otherwise!
- Arriva's current performance & pressures as a commercial operator were discussed. This is in the light of service changes that have been noted by the public on social media, etc It was agreed that an invitation to Arriva Midlands to attend in person the next Members Working Group session. We have been asked to collate questions to Arriva representatives and share with fellow colleagues as to whether there is anything they would like to ask on their behalf.

Dates are now being agreed for the next meeting in early December.

Ambulance Task and Finish Group

ET is representing the Independent members as part of this group. We have had several meetings to look at it's objectives which are:

- To consider how the wider system needs to contribute to enable Ambulance response times to improve
- To look at this through three areas of focus:
 - Primary Care and preventing A&E attendance
 - A&E Attendance and admission to Hospital
 - Preparing for discharge from hospital and discharge from hospital
- and then to make evidence-based recommendations so that its work is completed by the end of October '22

At our latest meeting on 18th October we reviewed the findings from earlier sessions and refined developing conclusions and recommendations. At our next (final?) meeting we hope to review the draft report (including the conclusions and recommendations) and confirm that the report is ready for publication at Council.

Shropshire Council Committees:

The **October Northern Planning Committee took place in Shirehall on 11/10/22 for ET** when planning applications for:

- a small solar park in a remote spot near Offa's Dyke
- a retrospective erection of a tool/storage building near Oswestry
- SC Advertising to be erected on 3 roundabouts around Whitchurch

were all considered. The first and third were unanimously accepted and the second unanimously refused.

In addition, Appeals and Appeal Decisions were looked at. The date of the next Planning Committee is on Tuesday 8th November.

The Strategic Licensing Committee in Shirehall on the 5th October for both ET and PB when the following agenda items were discussed and approved:

- Licensing Fees and Charges 2023 – 24
- Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 to 2027
- Revision of Hackney Carriage Table of Fares
- Proposed Variation of the Designation of Licenced Streets
- Responsibilities of Premises Licence Holders under the Licensing Act 2003
- Exercise of Delegated Powers

Regarding Whixall Parish, our activity this last month, as in September!, has been focussed on:

- Monitoring and, where needed, giving advice and support for planning/pre-planning applications and single plot eligibility for local young people and
- an on-going social care need involving a number of agencies made more difficult to resolve because of our rurality. We also discussed, at your October Parish Council meeting, the fear and rising concern over BT's proposal to switch personal alarms from using copper-based phone lines to broadband (with all its dead spots and unreliability in the sparsely populated Whixall parish) in the near future....and we all need to put our minds to solutions about this. It could be that using satellite connectivity and other emerging technologies may be one way forward, but our residents will need guidance and help from a variety of agencies adapting to this as....and when!... they become available.

We have also been asked by 'John of Whixall' to help publicise the new Whixall Social Centre Cuppa Club that is being held every Tuesday from 10.00am – 1.00pm. Here, beside keeping warm and making contact with others from across the parish, you can play cards, dominoes and have great brews and biscuits....all for a £1. He says he would be happy to take any villagers who would like to attend in his small bus. There is no fare but contributions can be made for running costs. He can be contacted on 01948 880037. This is another great 'self-help' initiative from within the parish, so do support and help publicise it.

Regarding other Wem Area matters that concern that we are either involved in or notified about:

Discussion about the future of Wem Economic Forum – There has been a further meeting, this time attended by 5 SC officers on the 19th October at Edinburgh House. This was a positive and encouraging meeting that largely looked at how to improve our High Street, help encourage our traders and attract new ones. It will be reported on at our next Town Council meeting under agenda item 13.

Wem Area Climate Action Forum – The group held a meeting on 3rd October to discuss preparation for a stall to attract new members and share what the group is doing in the town at the Wem Volunteers Fair held in the Town Hall on 11th October.

They also held their monthly meeting on 10th October in Wem Youth Club. The recent topics of applying for Charity Status/Biodiversity Project/Wildflower Planting and Trees/Buildings and the Environment/Footpaths/Level Crossing Signage/Concern over Group Numbers were all reviewed and steps to ensure continued progress in each of these areas. The next meeting is on 7th November, venue likely to be Wem Baptist Church Hall....but get in touch if you'd like to come and we'll confirm this with you.

The Wemian – We hesitate to mention but.... still looking for a new Editor and team members to help ensure this long running and valued local publication is able to continue to flourish, adapt and serve our community. As noted last month, Cllr Geoff Soul (Wem Town Council and Mayor of Wem) is its Treasurer and can be a point of contact for any who may want further details.

Useful Upcoming Wem Diary Date that we have been informed about!

Wem Christmas festival and Lights Switch-on (or 'Late Night Shopping'!) – Friday 2nd December 2022

As always, if there are other matters you wish to bring to attention, or you need further explanation on the above, then let us know.

Kindest regards,

Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers

Shropshire County Councillors for the Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall Division

Date: 4th November 2022

1. Remembrance Sunday (12 November)

The poppy wreath has been ordered and delivered.

The service is being held at Welsh End Methodist Church, starting at 10.45 followed by a ceremony at the War Memorial.

Sue Matthews will be leading the service and has everything in hand.

2. Grass Cutting

No invoices have been received this year. A letter has been sent to Chris Jones asking for an invoice to be sent as soon as possible.

The contract is due to be let next March, or it can be extended if both parties are in agreement. Chris has not been approached – the contract is included on the November agenda so that members can decide if they wish this to be discussed with Chris.

3. National Pay Offer

The current offer, which is almost certain to be accepted, is a blanket £1,925pa for full time workers, backdated to 1 April 2022.

When taking pension contributions into account, the financial implication for the Council would be in the region of £394. This figure is within the budget for the current financial year.

4. Moss Cottages Notice Board

The Perspex cover on the lockable noticeboard has gradually become green/opaque, meaning that notices cannot be read. Attempts to clean it have been unsuccessful. The damage may be due to the location of the notice board, as the identical board at the Social Centre is undamaged.

This will be brought forward as an agenda item as it may be advisable to replace the Perspex, move the noticeboard to another location in the parish and replace it with one which does not have a cover. This will have a financial implication.

5. Newsletter

The newsletters have been ordered and delivery is expected during w/c 31 October. The Clerk will sort out delivery routes and numbers and, unless otherwise requested, will bring them to the November meeting.

Members will need to deliver the newsletters before 12 November.

6. Connexus Grant

This £890 grant was specifically for the provision of a bench and picnic table at the Marlot. Connexus stipulated that a plaque acknowledging their contribution should be attached to the bench. An order has been placed totalling £765 + VAT. Once the plaque has been purchased, the Clerk will contact Connexus to establish if the remainder can be used for to purchase hand tools, or if it should be returned.

7. Parish Council Facebook Page

This is now set up as 'Whixall Parish Council'. At the time of writing the page has 2 followers.

A Roberts

2 November 2022

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting 9 November 2022

Period 10 October – 2 November 2022

Winter work is now fully underway at the Marlot. Work has commenced clearing the front meadow and brush-cutting it back to ground level. The challenge is the large sections of yearly growth goat willow. It is important to fully cut this back so that it does not grow into more substantial willow patches. A separate section of goat willow is being dug out by hand right down to the deep root structure, ensuring it does not return next year. Last year's willow digging efforts has been successful and no willow had grown back again. It is a hard and laborious task, which with the amount of willow on the front meadow, will take a considerable time to clear. The extra effort is worth it to ensure a willow clear front meadow.

The MCG has a new volunteer, Steve Manning from Ellesmere. He has been recruited from Graham's Whitchurch Walking Football team after showing some initial interest in what we do. During his first week he completed a Marlot Induction and Health and Safety brief and was put to work straight away in the clearing work. The MCG welcome him and his great efforts and work so far. We are actively putting the word out about the Marlot and the call for volunteers – winter work Facebook posts will be done over the next couple of sessions to show what we are doing and ask for further volunteers.

The MCG received the draft A5 Information leaflet back from Councillor Harris' graphic designer contact. With some good ideas and pointers, the MCG has now taken back the responsibility of leaflet design and content and will work on producing a final version which will be ready for print. The MCG members have also reviewed the draft Marlot Strategy and provided comments back to Councillor Mercer. I have passed details of the composite re-cycled plastic picnic bench and 3 seater bench that the MCG wished to be purchased, using the Connexus grant, to the Parish Clerk. These have now been ordered by the Parish Clerk and delivery is expected Thursday 3 November. These will be constructed and taken down to the Marlot in the next two weeks. The MCG also intends to re-cycle the two old wooden benches that are currently in the Marlot and in a bad state of repair. It is hoped that we can re-construct one bench from using parts from the current two and refurbish it to a state in which it can be used. The MCG would also appreciate any update from Councillor Rawlinson on any progress of the "wish list" of infrastructure requirements (directional finger posts and notice board backing board) as discussed at the WPC/MCG Marlot meeting.

Initial Draft for discussion.

The Marlot – Whixall Parish Council Strategy Vision and Aims

The Parish Council, working with partners, residents and the Marlot Conservation Group will:

- Raise nature conservation interest within the local community
- Promote recognition of the site's wildlife value
- Safeguard the ecosystem of the site
- Promote the improvement of the quality of life, health and well-being through involvement with nature
- Provide a place to learn about and explore the natural environment
- Increase local community involvement in the maintenance and upkeep of the Marlot
- Recognise the site's heritage and historic value as village common land
- Seek to attract more visitors to the area and provide a gateway to the Mosses National Nature Reserve.

This is intended to be a single page, the structure and layout is to identify the points final layout and style can be agreed on.

Methods of delivering the vision and aims:

- Administration and management requirements and responsibilities will be jointly delivered by the Marlot Conservation Group members and Parish Council. It is considered that a working sub group of two representatives from each organisation starts the process and that it reports back to both organisations.
- Physical Management requirements will be the responsibility of the MCG
- Financial requirements and considerations including looking at sponsorship and donation funding will require further work but will involve both organisations
- Public relations/Communication will be a joint responsibility with MCG taking the lead and involving the PC as required.

An initial meeting of the combined working group identified the following:

Need to agree and set up a management process

The need to identify potential funding streams and partners.

- Infrastructure and asset requirements
 - Picnic Tables and Benches
 - A5 Information leaflet (with box) outside Marlot for visitors
 - Interpretation Boards around site (Entrance, ponds, meadows, woods)
 - Signed directional finger posts (one outside Marlot entrance directing visitors to site, one inside indicating paths to meadows, ponds and woods, one on Mosses pathway outside back gate entrance to Marlot)
 - Brown main road signs – to assist visitors with finding The Marlot (one at canal side bridge a must) – liaison/investigation with Shropshire Council on process/cost
 - Need for a full base level flora and fauna survey of The Marlot (who, when, cost, report type – NE intern project?)
 - Timeframes/project plan to achieve above.

1. Background

The Parish Council has a number of policies and procedures. These are necessary for the smooth running of the Council and in many cases are a legal requirement. Policies must be regularly reviewed by the Council, to ensure they are up to date.

An analysis of existing Whixall Parish Council policies highlighted the following:

- i. Some existing documents had not been reviewed since they were adopted
- ii. Some essential documents did not exist

2. Review and Approval Process

The approach taken by most Parish Councils is that, unless specified otherwise, all policies are reviewed and re-approved at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, held in May each year. This is the approach that Whixall PC will take from 2023 onwards.

In the meantime, there are a number of policies which need to be dealt with and a small number will be brought forward to each of the next few Parish Council meetings.

The Clerk will keep a register of adopted documents and this will be used to ensure that all documentation is up to date.

3. Documents to be Approved in NovemberExisting Policies to be Reviewed

The content of each the following documents has been approved, but re-approval is required:

Document	Notes	Necessity
Grants and Donations Policy & Procedure	Content was approved in March 2021 but it has not been presented as a formal policy document.	Desirable
Records Management Policy	Adopted in 2015 – the content has been reviewed and is unchanged.	Recommended
Standing Orders	Adopted in 2019. Amended for Coronavirus in 2020.	Mandatory
Financial Regs	Adopted in 2020	Mandatory

New Policies to be Adopted

The following documents are newly developed and need to be approved and adopted:

Document	Notes	Necessity
Health & Safety Policy	A high-level statement of the Council's approach to H&S. It is supported by risk assessments as required.	Statutory requirement.
Financial Reserves Policy	Information on the current level of financial reserves.	Desirable
Scheme of Delegation	A summary of powers delegated to the Clerk. Including emergency powers.	Desirable
Publication Scheme	A summary of all information available from the Parish Council.	Mandatory
Complaints Procedure	The formal approach to external complaints about the Clerk or Councillors.	Essential
Communication Protocol	A summary of external and internal communication procedures.	Desirable

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that members re-approve the existing documents and adopt the new documents.

Whixall Parish Council



GRANTS & DONATIONS POLICY

Background

Each year Whixall Parish Council gives small grants to organisations whose work benefits people who live within the Parish. The sum allocated for grants and donations is part of the annual precept of the Council.

Eligibility to receive grant funding and donations

Eligible	Ineligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisations or community groups within the parish• Organisations outside the parish who can show that their work benefits people from Whixall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private individuals• Political parties• Organisations whose work does not provide any benefit to Whixall residents• Organisations whose sole purpose is make profit• Religious organisations (unless for a purpose that does not discriminate on grounds of belief)• Organisations who request funding to support their statutory responsibilities

Application Process

Applicants are required to complete and return a short application form which is available in hard copy and on the website.

Decision Process

Grants are usually decided in February each year, although the Council may occasionally decide to announce additional grant funding on its website. The Parish Council may ask applicants to attend a meeting to discuss their application.

Parish Councillors will consider the following when assessing grant applications:

- Is the grant from an eligible organisation or group?
- Will the activity benefit residents of Whixall?
- Do the costs appear realistic?
- Are there more appropriate streams of funding for this activity?

Successful Applications

Grants will be paid by bank transfer, usually before the end of March. The parish council will publish an annual list of grants it has awarded on its website.

Recipients may be asked to provide an update of how the grant has been spent. This information will be made publicly available.

Unsuccessful Applications

The Parish Clerk will contact the applicant shortly after the meeting with an explanation and, if appropriate will provide guidance for a future application.

Adopted	March 2021
Review Frequency	Annual
Next Review due	November 2022

Whixall Parish Council



RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Whixall Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its documents and records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is a standard procedure for maintaining and retaining appropriate documents.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions.

Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. The National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Legal Topic Note (LTN)40 provides further detail about the length of time documents are kept.

The following documentation is required to be published under the 2014 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities and as such will also be stored electronically and in hard copy:

- a. All items of expenditure above £100
- b. End of year accounts
- c. Annual governance statement
- d. Internal audit report
- e. List of councillor or member responsibilities
- f. The details of public land and building assets
- g. Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

In addition to the above list, the following will also be stored electronically and in hard copy:

- a. Investment details
- b. Title deeds, leases, agreements and contracts
- c. Register and plans for allotments
- d. Documents relating to burial grounds
- e. Policies
- f. Newsletters

Some of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research. The LTN 40 states that meeting minutes, receipt and payment accounts should be archived. The Clerk will liaise with Shropshire Archives to agree receipt of these and possibly other documents of interest.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council recognises it has a responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment.

The person with overall responsibility for this Policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Retention of Documents

The Parish Clerk will refer directly to the latest version of National Association for Local Councils (NALC) Legal Topic Note (LTN)40- Local Council's Documents and Records, for information relating to the length of time certain documents should be retained.

Whixall Parish Council



RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Parish Council will review this policy bi-annually to ensure that its compliance with national guidance is up to date.

The Parish Council will deposit documents required to be retained permanently with Shropshire Archives as necessary.

All documents not required to be retained as per the Retention Schedule will be destroyed once it is clear that they are no longer of use or relevant. For example, the following can be destroyed after 6 years:

- Scales of fees and charges
- Receipt books of all kinds
- Quotations and tenders
- Paid invoices
- Paid cheques
- VAT records
- Petty cash, postage and telephone books
- Members allowances register

The destruction of documents

Paper documents will be shredded.

Electronic records: The hard disk on the Parish Council's computer will be over written in the event that it is no longer used by the Clerk for the role of Clerk.

Adopted	October 2015
Review Frequency	5-yearly
Next Review due	

Whixall Parish Council

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS



Adopted	February 2020
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review	

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1. General

1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:

- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.7. Members of council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.

1.9. The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the council;
- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
- wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.

1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
- procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
- identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
- procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition, the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council

2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.

2.6. The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
- report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council

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

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

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

3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning

3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than February prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.

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

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

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

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £100; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £100

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 15% of the budget.

4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. The council shall seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.

5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.

5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available council meeting.

5.5. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:

a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council;

b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council; or

c) fund transfers within the council's banking arrangements up to the sum of £1,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or Finance Committee].

5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8. In respect of grants, a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.

5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.10. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

5.11. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6. Instructions for the making of payments

6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council.

6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee shall be signed by two members of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.

6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

6.14. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

6.17. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by two of the Clerk, a member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £100 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.

6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

6.21. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

7. Payment of salaries

7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.

7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the

appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council.

7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- b) by the internal auditor;
- c) by the external auditor; or
- d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

7.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

8. Loans and investments – not applicable

9. Income

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

9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.

9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.

9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.

9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

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

9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

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

10. Orders for work, goods and services

10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.

10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.

10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. Contracts

11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;

- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;
- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.

c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².

d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.

e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)
- b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)

g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders[], ³[insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above£100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

i) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

j) Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

12. Payments under contracts for building/other construction works – not applicable

13. Stores and equipment – not applicable

14. Assets, properties and estates

14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.

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

14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of

³ Based on NALC's Model Standing Order 18d ©NALC 2018

valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.

14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. Insurance

15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

15.2. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.

15.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16. Charities – not applicable

17. Risk management

17.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

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

18.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the

suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

The Model Financial Regulations templates were produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in July 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

Whixall Parish Council

STANDING ORDERS



Approved	September 2019
Amended	July 2020
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to lay down procedures for the governance of Whixall Parish Council.

These Standing Orders are based on Model Standing Orders 2018 produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements and NALC recommend that Councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning. Standing orders not in bold are designed to help the Council operate effectively but as they do not contain statutory requirements they have been amended to suit the needs of the Council.

The Standing Orders will be reviewed in October 2023 or when new Model Standing Orders are produced.

Signed by the Chairman of the Council

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Reviewer	Amendment Date	Amendments
Full Council	09 September 2019	Adoption
Full Council	3 June 2020	Review

1. **RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS**

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

in the debate on a motion except:

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to put the motion to a vote;
 - iii. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - iv. to adjourn the debate;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to exclude the public and press;
 - vii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - viii. to proceed to the next business;
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave

offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

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

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

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

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

than three minutes.

- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n **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.**
- o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).**
- p **The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q **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.**
- r **The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting**

- **vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

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

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

- t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i. the time and place of the meeting;
- ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

- u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**

- v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- w **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.
-
- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of two and a half hours.

4. **COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
 - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 7.30pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman 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 Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

- xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

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

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any two members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

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

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER (See Section 15)

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

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

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

Proper Officer:

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

11. **MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION**

See also standing order 20.

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

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

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

12. DRAFT MINUTES

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

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

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

meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. **CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS**

See also standing order 3(u).

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

participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;

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

14. **CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

- a Upon notification by the District or 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, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman 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(d).
- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d **Upon notification by the District or 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 him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. **PROPER OFFICER**

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee**

or a sub-committee,

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

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

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least four days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also standing order 23);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in

his absence the Vice-Chairman 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.

- xv. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvi. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also standing order 23).

16. **RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

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

17. **ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported andwhich includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to

date for information; and

- ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the

execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:

- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. 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;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.**
- g. **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

19. **HANDLING STAFF MATTERS**

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Council or the Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of the Staffing Committee or, if he is not available, the vice-chairman (if there is one) of the Staffing Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting.
- c The chairman of the Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Staffing Committee.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chairman of the Staffing Committee or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Staffing Committee this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. **RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. **RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

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

22. **RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

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

23. **EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

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

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

24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b 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

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

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

27. Addendum to Standing Orders Adopted 8 July 2020

Introduction:

On the 4 April 2020, the government brought into force The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely.

Meeting Format:

Platform – The Council will predominantly use the Zoom Platform for holding virtual meetings of the Council. In doing so they will comply with the Government Regulations and ensure the business of the Council continues until regulations are lifted and the Council's normal Standing Orders can be followed again. This will enable participants to be seen and heard including members of the public. If there are problems with internet connections, there is a facility to join by phone.

Meetings will be advertised on the Parish Council Website and will include the notice in bold below:

With immediate effect until May 2021, the Parish Council can legally hold remote/virtual meetings. The details for these meetings will be advertised on the Town Council Website together with how you can participate in the meeting as member of the public".

Glossary

Advisory Committee	An advisory committee is a group of people, commonly volunteers, who are either internal and/or external to the Council, who meet to advise the Council on issues.
Committee	A group of people appointed for a specific function by the Council and typically consisting of members of the Council. Unless otherwise agreed, the Chair of the Council will also chair the committee.
Staffing Committee	A group of people appointed to deal with staffing matters. The committee comprises the Chair and two Councillors. The Chair of the Council is also Chair of the Staffing Committee.
Standing Committee	A permanent committee that meets regularly.
Sub Committee	A committee composed of some members of a larger committee and reporting to it.

Whixall Parish Council



Complaints Procedure

Whixall Parish Council defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council'.

Complaints can provide valuable learning points which help to improve service delivery. The Parish Council's Complaints Procedure Aims:

- To ensure that customers are treated fairly and assist them in making a complaint by being easy and straightforward to use;
- To ensure complaints will be investigated as quickly and thoroughly as possible, and in a positive, problem-solving manner;
- To ensure that the outcome and resolution of complaints will be used to monitor the Council's performance and improve service delivery;

On the receipt of a complaint in the first instance the Parish Clerk or Chairman will make every attempt to contact the complainant to attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If this is not possible then the formal complaints procedure is outlined below.

Complaints against Councillors

All councillors sign to undertake to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council. A full copy of the Code of Conduct is available on the Parish Council's website at www.whixallparish.org.uk If after studying the Code of Conduct a complainant feels a Councillor has broken any of the rules in the Code of Conduct, they should refer the complaint directly to

The Monitoring Officer
Shropshire Council
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Complaints against the Clerk:

Complaints should be in writing to the Chairman : -

The Chairman
Whixall Parish Council
Westmead
Tilley Road
Wem
SY4 5HA

Any other complaints should be in writing to the Parish Clerk at the above address.

Whixall Parish Council



Complaints Procedure

Receipt of Complaints

All complaints must be submitted in writing.

The Council will not consider anonymous complaints therefore a name and contact address must be included with all correspondence. Complaints should include as much information as possible.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by either the Clerk or Chairman within seven working days and the complainant will be informed who will be investigating the complaint. The Council aims to be able to resolve most non-complex complaints immediately, but for more complex issues an investigation may need to be undertaken.

On receipt of a complaint, the Clerk or the Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about, giving them an opportunity to comment.

Complaint Investigation

If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally, the Council will form a Complaints Committee which will formally meet to investigate the complaint in more detail.

If deemed necessary at this stage the complainant may be invited to a meeting with the Complaints Committee to discuss the issues raised. If the complainant is submitting documentation or evidence for the meeting they should provide copies to the Complaints Committee at least 7 clear working days before the meeting. Similarly the Clerk will supply the complainant with copies of any Parish Council documents that are requested, provided these are documents available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act.

The complaints committee will present the findings of investigations into complaints to the next Parish Council meeting along with any recommendations for any future service improvements identified as a result of the complaint.

Under Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the Council or Committee may consider whether the circumstances warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public. In the interests of openness and accountability there must be clear relevant reasons or a request from the Complainant for the matter to be held without the presence of the press or public. The decision of the Council or Committee, however, will be made public at the end of the meeting.

Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible and under normal circumstances the complainant should receive a written response within 20 working days however in the case of complex complaints if it is not possible to meet this timescale the complainant will be informed.

It should be noted that currently the Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Parish and Parish Councils.

Whixall Parish Council

Complaints Procedure



DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS

From time to time the Parish Council receives complaints from members of the public.

In the event that a complainant begins to make frequent contact with the Parish Clerk and hinders the normal day to day running of the Parish Council, the Council will implement a policy for dealing with frequent or vexatious complainants, since such complaints can be time consuming and could lead to unnecessary additional cost to the Council tax payer.

The Parish Council's policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants will become operative if the complainant is deemed to be unreasonably persistent.

PROCEDURE

A vexatious complainant will be notified that the Council's Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complaints is to be enforced, together with the reason why.

The complainant will then be asked to adopt one or all of the following procedures

- To contact the Parish Council in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- That contact with Council Staff may only take place with a Councillor present;
- That telephone calls from the complainant are restricted to specified days and times;
- That the complainant will be asked to enter into an agreement about future contact with the Parish Council

The Council will decide how long it will spend on any one complaint and whether it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. In all cases where a complainant is deemed to be unreasonable and persistent, the Council will write to the complainant to justify its course of action and explain for how long it will be operative.

The complainant may challenge the Council's decision, although proof that the complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with will be required. However, if deemed to be a fair challenge the Council will conduct a review of the complaint and will reconsider whether the complaint should still be treated as unreasonable and/or vexatious.

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Powers Delegated to the Parish Clerk

Date approved	Specific Delegated Powers	Reviewed
13 January 2021	<p>Planning</p> <p>To delegate authority to the Parish Clerk following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to respond to planning applications whose deadline for consultation falls prior to a Parish Council meeting, provided that no Councillor requests a special meeting is required to discuss the application.</p>	Annually

13 January 2021	Consultations To delegate authority to the Parish Clerk following discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair to respond to external consultations where the deadline falls prior to a Parish Council meeting, providing that no Councillor requests a special meeting to discuss the consultation.	Annually
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Date approved	Emergency Delegated Powers	
new	<p>Upon the declaration of a pandemic or emergency situation which will affect the work of the Council, with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To delegate authority to the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to approve expenditure against items in the Parish Council's budget any such payments to be reported to the Council at the next ordinary meeting. • To extend the financial emergency delegation powers approved laid out in the financial regulations to a limit of £1,000 • Planning – to delegate authority to the Parish Clerk following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair-to respond to all planning applications following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, provided that no Councillor has requested a special meeting to discuss the application • To delegate authority to the Clerk to act upon Government advice in relation to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council • Holding of the Annual Parish Meeting • Arrangements for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return • Implementation of any changes to the decision-making process for Parish Council • That any emergency scheme of delegation should remain in place until emergency restrictions are lifted, at which time it will be reviewed. 	Annually

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Whixall Parish Council



Communications Protocol

Parish Council Correspondence

The point of contact for the parish council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all correspondence for the parish council should be addressed.

The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.

No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the parish council, a committee, sub-committee or working party. In particular, Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.

Most official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper. For correspondence not sent by the Clerk, he/she must be provided with a copy.

Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person.

Agenda Items for Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties

Agenda should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.

Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.

Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for "information only", this information will be circulated via the Clerk.

Communications with the Press and Public

The Clerk will clear press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chairman of the council or the Chairman of the relevant committee.

Press reports from the council, its committees or working parties should be from the Clerk or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.

Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

Unless a Councillor is reporting the view of the council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.

If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council's adopted complaints procedure.

Councillor Correspondence to external parties

As the Clerk should be sending most of the council's correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies, it needs to be made clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the parish council.

A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and this is to be noted on the correspondence so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

Whixall Parish Council



Communications Protocol

Communications with Parish Council Staff

Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).

No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chairman of the council, the Chairman of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to a member of staff which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.

Emails:

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk
- reasons for urgency should be stated
- Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk
- Emails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk
- Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.

Meetings with the Clerk:

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made
- Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Whixall Parish Council



Health & Safety Policy

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

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

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

Statement of General Policy

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

Approved by the Council on 9 November 2022: to be reviewed and re-affirmed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting

Signed:

Approved	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Whixall Parish Council



INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

Class 1 Who are we and what do we do Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts		
Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Who's who on the Council and its committees	Website Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council Members named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address	Website Hard Copy	10p/sheet

CLASS 2 - What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement contracts and financial audit)		
Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Annual return form and report by auditor	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Finalised budget	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Precept	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Borrowing Approval Letter	n/a	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Grants given and received	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard Copy	10p/sheet

CLASS 3 What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	Hard Copy	Individual copies free. Multiple requests 10p/sheet
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council Members named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address	Hard Copy	individual copies free. Multiple requests 10p/sheet
Quality Status	n/a	
Local Charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	n/a	

Whixall Parish Council



INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

CLASS 4 How we make decisions

(Decision making processes and records of decisions)

Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee / sub committee meetings and parish meeting)	Website Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website Hard Copy	10p/sheet*
Minutes of meetings (as above) - Note this will exclude information that is properly provided as private to the meeting	Website Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Reports presented to Council meetings - Note this will exclude information that is properly provided as private to the meeting	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Responses to planning applications	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Bylaws	n/a	

Class 5 - Our policies and procedures

(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)

Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Procedural standing orders	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Codes of Conduct	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Policy Statements	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Policies and Procedures for the provision of services and about employment of staff	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Equality and Diversity Policy	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Health and Safety Policy	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Recruitment Policies including current vacancies	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Policies/procedures for handling information requests	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Information security policy	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Records management policy (records retention, destruction and archive)	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Data Protection policies	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Hard Copy	10p/sheet

Whixall Parish Council



INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

CLASS 6 Lists and Registers

Currently maintained lists and registers only

Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing provisions will suffice)	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Assets register	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Disclosure Log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests recommended as good practice but may not be held by parish councils)	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Register of members' interests	Hard Copy	10p/sheet
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard Copy	10p/sheet

Class 7 - The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses (current information only)

Information to be published	How it can be obtained	Cost
Allotments	n/a	n/a
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	n/a	n/a
Community centres and village halls	n/a	n/a
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	n/a	n/a
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	n/a	n/a
Bus shelters	n/a	n/a
Markets	n/a	n/a
Public conveniences	n/a	n/a
Agency agreements	n/a	n/a
A summary of services for which the Council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	n/a	n/a

Contact Details. To obtain hard copies please contact the Parish Clerk at: Westmead, Tilley Road, Wem, SY4 5HA clerk@whixallpc@hotmail.co.uk

Information available on the Council's website can be viewed at: www.whixallparish.org.uk

Information can also be inspected by appointment. Such inspection is free of charge unless any fees or undue expenditure are incurred by the Council, which will be charged at cost.

Approved	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Whixall Parish Council



FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

Introduction

Whixall Parish Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. However, there is no specified minimum level of reserves that an authority should hold, and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer to advise the Council about the level of reserves and to ensure that there are procedures for their establishment and use.

Types of Reserves

Reserves can be categorised as general or earmarked.

Earmarked reserves can be held for several reasons:

- Renewals – to enable services to plan and finance an effective programme of vehicle, equipment and infrastructure replacement and planned property maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.
- Carry forward of underspend - some services commit expenditure to projects, but cannot spend the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.
- Insurance reserve – to enable the Council to meet the excesses of claims not covered by insurance.
- Other earmarked reserves may be set up from time to time to meet known or predicted liabilities.

General Reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions as to their use. These reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement if necessary or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies.

Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves will be established on a “needs” basis, in line with anticipated requirements.

Any decision to set up a reserve must be made by the Council and expenditure from reserves can only be authorised by the Council.

Reserves should not be held to fund on-going expenditure. This would be unsustainable as, at some point, the reserves would be exhausted. To the extent that reserves are used to meet short term funding gaps, they must be replenished in the following year. However, earmarked reserves that have been used to meet a specific liability would not need to be replenished, having served the purpose for which they were originally established.

All Earmarked Reserves are recorded on a central schedule held by the Responsible Financial Officer which lists the various Earmarked Reserves and the purpose for which they are held.

Reviewing the Council's Financial Risk Assessment is part of the budgeting and year end accounting procedures and identifies planned and unplanned expenditure items and thereby indicates an appropriate level of Reserves.

General Reserves

The level of General Reserves is a matter of judgement and so this policy does not attempt to prescribe a blanket level. The primary means of building general reserves will be through an allocation from the annual budget. This will be in addition to any amounts needed to replenish reserves that have been consumed in the previous year.

Setting the level of General Reserves is one of several related decisions in the formulation of the medium-term financial strategy and the annual budget. The Council must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces, as expressed in its financial risk assessment.

If in extreme circumstances General Reserves were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, the Council would be able to draw down from its earmarked reserves to provide short term resources.

Even at times when extreme pressure is put on the Council's finances the Council must keep a minimum balance sufficient to pay one month's salaries to staff in General Reserves at all times.

Current level of financial reserves

The level of financial reserves held by the council will be agreed by the Parish Council during the discussions held regarding the setting of the budget for the next financial year.

The minimum level of general reserves to be held by the Council is three twelfths of the annual precepted figure, to fully cover three months' expenditure. This figure is £2,943 for the total precept of possibly £11,770 in the financial year 2022/23.

The Council currently holds the following earmarked reserves:

Reserve	Current Level	Maximum Level
Marlot	£714	No maximum
Office Equipment	£226	£750
Neighbourhood Fund	£1,937	External funding
Hollinwood Green Picnic Bench	£150	£450
Hollinwood Green Lawnmower	£265	£350
Painting & Maintenance	£674	No maximum
Election Costs	£883	£2000
Total	£4,849	

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Bank Reconciliation
Whixall Parish Council

Balance per Bank statements as at 31 October 2022	£	£
Current Account (Unity Trust)	8,266.40	
Savings Account (Unity Trust)	10,582.71	
Petty Cash	-	
		18,849.11
Less: any un-presented cheques		
cheque no		
		-
Add any unbanked cash		
Net Bank balances		18,849.11
CASH BOOK		
Opening Balance	11,897.66	
Add: Receipts in the year to date	11,879.91	
Less: Payments in the year to date	- 4,928.46	
Balance as at 31 October 2022		18,849.11

Variance -



Customer: Whixall Parish Council

Account: 60-83-01 20423120

Statement 31 from 01 Oct 2022 to 31 Oct 2022

Date	Description	Serial No	Debits	Credits	Balance
01Oct2022	Brought forward balance			10,582.71	10,582.71

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Customer: Whixall Parish Council

Account: 60-83-01 20423117

Statement 41 from 01 Oct 2022 to 31 Oct 2022

Date	Description	Serial No	Debits	Credits	Balance
01Oct2022	Brought forward balance			8,964.43	8,964.43
18Oct2022	B/P to: AJ Roberts		(196.82)		8,767.61
18Oct2022	B/P to: HMRC Cumbernauld		(328.40)		8,439.21
26Oct2022	B/P to: SLCC		(112.00)		8,327.21
28Oct2022	Direct Debit (NEST)		(60.81)		8,266.40

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1. Current and Predicted Budget Position

All figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

Budget Heading	Budget	Spend to date	Predicted outturn	Predicted Year-End balance
Staff costs	5,056	3,239	4,788	268
General Administration*	627	340	610	17
Room Hire	334	32	144	190
Training	200	280	280	- 80
Grass Cutting	1,500	15	1,215	285
Marlot	217	88	217	-
Marlot repairs	200	-	-	200
Assets	-	435	435	- 435
Insurance	362	359	359	3
Chairman's Fund	700	347	700	-
Affiliations	438	510	545	- 107
Events	350		440	- 90
Neighbourhood fund	1,937		1,937	
Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	1,018	1,018	1,018	
Funding from Earmarked reserves	435		435	
VAT to be reclaimed				
Total	13,374	5,645	13,123	251

*General Administration covers office, election, travel, communications, audit and banking

In addition to the above, the Council received grant funding from Connexus. As this is one-off funding it is not included in budget planning for next year.

2. Proposed 2023/24 Budget

Budget Headings	2022/23 budget	Proposed 2023/24 budget	Notes
Staff costs	5,056	5,562	10% increase
General Admin	627	690	10% increase
Room Hire	334	334	No increase as underspent in 22/23
Training	200	220	10% increase
Grass Cutting	1,500	1,650	10% - Contract to be extended or re-let
Marlot	217	238	10%
Marlot repairs	200	200	No increase as not spent in 22/23
Insurance	362	362	No increase – year 3 of 3 yr agreement
Chairman's Fund	700	440	10% increase on £400 base budget
Affiliations	438	587	10% increase on SALC only
Events	350	440	10% increase on anticipated 22/23 spend
Earmarked Reserves	1018	1,078	10% increase (Marlot) others 5%
Total	11,002	11,801	7.3% increase overall

3. Considerations

- a. The Council is currently holding £1,937 in Neighbourhood funding.
- b. The Marlot Action plan, for discussion in November, has financial implications
- c. The allocation for Christmas 2023 (Events) can only be agreed once feedback is received from this year's activity.
- d. The Social Centre Committee has asked for a £200 grant for a Coronation Event. As this is a one-off event, should members agree to the request, any funds would be found from reserves rather than precepted.

4. Impact on the Precept

The precept for the current year was £10,700

For next year it is predicted that the precept will need to be £11,550 (the working budget minus £251 surplus from the current year). This will represent an actual increase of 7.95%. NB This is only an estimate at this stage.

It is not possible to calculate the increase in council tax payments until the formula is received from Shropshire Council in January 2023.

A Roberts

3 November 2022



Mandy Roberts
Whixall Parish Clerk
Whixall Parish Council
Whixall

Whixall Social Centre
Church Lane
Whixall
Whitchurch
Shropshire
SY13 2NA

1 Nov 2022

Dear Mandy,

Village Event to Commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

I am writing on behalf of the Chair and Committee of Whixall Social Centre. At a recent Social Centre Committee meeting an idea was proposed to hold a village event to commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. It was felt by the Committee that it was important that the village celebrated the event in some way. We have decided to hold a “King’s Garden Party” either the weekend prior to the Coronation date of Saturday 6 May 2023, or the weekend after the Coronation at the Social Centre. The event would be a limited ticketed event to enable us to know exact numbers of attending villagers – numbers yet to be decided but would be on a first come first served basis. A ticketed event allows us to either avoid wasting food and drink or indeed running out based on an unknown attendance. It is intended to provide the classic “Garden Party” fare – a selection of “posh” sandwiches, cakes and scones, tea and fruit squashes and small tubs of local ice cream. The Social Centre Committee agreed that this event should be free to villagers (hopefully this would encourage attendance and participation) and to this effect the Social Centre Committee is going to contribute £200 towards running costs. We would like to request that the Parish Council consider whether they could match and contribute an additional £200 to assist in the overall cost of the event and factor this into their new financial year budget. This would greatly help in covering the associated costs of food, drink, prizes, decorations and band fees for this village event.

To make the event interactive we intend to have a “Ladies Bonnet/ Best Hat” competition and also a “King and Queen” fancy dress competition for the children, with appropriate prizes for the winners. We would also like to see if we could get a band (Wem or Whitchurch Town Bands) to attend and play at the event – this again may incur a fee which would need to be covered. Further ideas for the day are yet to be finalised and if anyone on the Parish Council has any thoughts, then we would be grateful for anything that you consider would enhance the event.

The Social Centre Committee has also decided that we need to commemorate the Coronation with some permanent item at the Social Centre and have decided that we would look at commissioning a “Coronation Gate” to replace the gate at the corner of the car park. We are looking at ring fencing a sum of £1500 to £2000 from our limited Social Centre funds towards the purchase of the gate. We will probably have to raise more monies through other fund raising events before May 2023 to cover the gate cost. Part of the “Garden Party” event would be an official unveiling of the new gate. We will shortly be looking for any local blacksmiths and manufacturers to see what can be achieved and

at what sort of cost. The gate will be along the same lines of the Silver Jubilee entrance gates; a simple and classic gate to commemorate this important event.

I would appreciate it if this Social Centre Committee event and our specific request that the Parish Council contribute £200 towards running costs could be placed on the November Parish Council meeting agenda for further discussion and any decision .

We look forward to hearing the Parish Council's considerations and thoughts.

Yours Aye

Graham Turnbull

On behalf of Stephen Grogan (Chair) and Whixall Social Centre Committee.