
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Draft Minutes

of the ordinary Meeting of the Group Parish Council on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. Ken Bemand
Cllr. Chris Marston
Cllr. Tim Yair,
Cllr. Clare Harris
Cllr. Rob Pugh

Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright (Chairman)
Cllr. Sarah Sneyd
Cllr. Janette Fullwood
Cllr. James Hinton
Cllr. Richard Thomas

Ward Councillor Bruce Baker, Clerk & RFO: Allan Drew

No members of the public attended.

49/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Anne Grace

50/25 Declaration of interests and dispensations

None received

51/25 Minutes of previous meetings

Cllr. Fullwood raised two points-

- Her annual report on Stoke Prior village hall had not been included in the minutes. The Clerk apologised for the omission and would add the report which had been received and which was included at the Annual Meeting.
- The Clerk clarified that although Kinnersley was on the A4112 road the "smiley face" SID could not be used on the A44 because of the higher classification of the A44.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025 were then approved and signed by the Chairman

52/25 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman announced that-

- Mr Kieran Wyldes had successfully purchased the Lamb Inn and had received the keys on 15 July. After many years of struggle and setbacks the Lamb would finally be open again as a public house.
- The community noticeboard outside the old Post Office is now in very poor condition and also sits on private land. It had been suggested that a new noticeboard should be purchased and installed close by the Lamb Inn. The Chairman suggested that the Council could pay half of the cost (amounting to about £450) and this suggestion would be further discussed at the next meeting

53/25 Update on Stoke Prior school by Mr Matt Lewis, Headteacher

Mr Lewis provided the following update on Stoke Prior school-

- 2024-25 has been a really good year both sporting and academic. Years 5&6 won the County Cricket championship. Year 4 were County Cricket runner-up. The rugby team came first in a big tournament in Bromyard. The football team won the Leominster North tournament. Year 4 team won a netball tournament in Hereford and there were successes for the cross-country team also. Musically the school choir has won a gold medal at the Hereford Performing Arts festival. Academically the year 6 SATs results were well above the national averages.
- Intake last September was low with 4 new students in reception class.
- A negative OFSTED report in 2022 has not been repeated with a 2023 follow-up showing improvement to the next level (requires improvement). The school is now doing a lot of self-promotion especially on Facebook to encourage parents of potential students to visit the school and form their own views. Signage has been extended following comments that some parents did not even know that the school existed.
- A pre-school playgroup has been started on Friday morning and is well attended by up to 25 families. The September 2025 intake has increased to 11.
- The PTA raised £1000 last year but financing remains difficult as budget allocation lags increased numbers by up to a year.
- There is a consultation on starting a pre-school group for 3+ since children coming to pre-school tend to become full time students into reception.

- The Academy now undertakes all the corporate functions such as HR, Finance etc. This step has improved the level of support compared with that provided by the Local Authority. The Academy Trust allows the school to organise the curriculum in the best way given that there are mixed age groups within the classes.
- The wind turbine has been de-commissioned and moved to a new location.

Mr Lewis would like to make these updates a regular event, and it was agreed that the next update would be in March 2026. The Clerk would update the Forward Plan.

54/25 Public participation

Under Standing Order 8, any member of the public may make a statement or give evidence to the meeting on any business to be transacted or any other business, and ask or answer questions. At the discretion of the Chairman such participation may be permitted under the relevant agenda item.

No members of the public present

55/25 District Councillor's report

To receive: a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Baker reported that-

- This administration is now two years into its four-year term
- There is progress on the by-pass. The Southern Link Road (now known as Hereford Western Bypass phase one) which connects the A465 to the A49 will commence in 2026.
- The accounts for 2024-25 are now closed. Herefordshire Council ended the year 2024-25 with a £0.5m surplus. In 2023 the projected overspend was £13m
- Last year the spend for Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport was £4.5m. Options to reduce this spend are being considered.
- The College of Arts is running a summer programme of short courses for adults in the creative art space.
- Government will no longer fund NDPs
- White claw crayfish in the River Arrow are dying from what is believed to be crayfish plague. The Environment Agency is investigating.
- The planning application for the Merton Meadows area is approaching determination. (It was granted with conditions on 31 July 2025). However, there are concerns about possible flooding.
- There is a "Call for Sites" issued for the new Local Plan. The sites are not necessarily just for housing.
- The annual canvass is approaching and will cover 87,000 dwellings.

56/25 Planning Committee and planning applications update

(a) To consider for comment new applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council.

Ford & Stoke Prior

Two new applications to check if prior approval is required – 251565 Ford farm, HR6 0LE and 251435 Luce farm HR6 0RR. The determinations have already been made and PA is NOT required.

Humber

251590 New Barn, Gt. Marston Farm, Risbury, HR6 0NJ Application for prior approval to erect roof over manure heap. **Prior approval refused, planning application required.**

251884 Land at Buckland farm, Docklow, HR6 0RU Conversion of redundant rural farm buildings to 8 dwellings. Demolition of existing farm buildings and erection of new farm buildings.

This application is in Docklow Parish. Council agreed that it would support the comments made by Docklow Council. The Clerk submitted the following comments-

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council discussed this application at its meeting on 16 July 2025. The application is in the neighbouring Parish of Docklow and Docklow Parish Council has already submitted comments supporting the application. Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council is in agreement with Docklow and SUPPORTS the application

(b) To note: updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective). **Undecided.**

This application is due to be determined by Herefordshire Planning and Regulatory Committee. However, it is not on the latest posted agenda for the meeting of 4 July 2025. The Chairman has written to the Ward Cllr. expressing his concerns regarding the delay in determining a retrospective application. The Planning Officer, Rebecca Jenman provided Cllr. Baker with an update on the case. This update is summarised as-

The retrospective planning application 223610 is currently under review, with a request for committee determination. This determination is likely to be conditional upon approval by the planning officer. An extension

has been proposed until the end of September for the submission of additional documents, including a heritage statement and an aerial emission assessment. The applicant is preparing these documents to address outstanding issues. However, there is no guarantee that these submissions will resolve the technical concerns. Any required mitigation measures must be implemented upfront rather than through planning conditions.

Cllr. Baker believed that if the required information is not forthcoming by the end of September the application will be refused.

It was also confirmed that Herefordshire is using contract planners to help work through the backlog of applications. However, Cllr. Baker was unaware of when this backlog might be cleared.

On the phosphate problems it was believed that the queue to obtain credits is about four years. Herefordshire had written to Government requesting that the phosphate restrictions be lifted but other interest groups such as Natural England are against such a relaxation without proper measures to address the problems.

200705/251098 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm Stoke Prior. Application to lift conditions 3 & 4 of 200705
Split decision C3 not upheld, C4 discharged

204437 Plot 1 Land at Old Hall Stoke Prior HR6 0LH Proposed construction of a new self-build custom home and garage
Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

Humber.

241806 Oak Tree View Risbury HR6 0NQ Proposed Conversion of Building to a self-build dwelling House
Undecided

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG
Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).
Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG
Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648.
Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire
Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687.
Undecided

193259 New House Farm Risbury HR6 0NQ Outline planning for proposed housing development on land at New House Farm.
Undecided

Cllr. Bemand mentioned that there were some travellers' caravans on the A44/A49 roundabout. Cllr. Hinton understood that the travellers had been served a section 77 notice which required them to vacate the site by 15 July. This had not happened so further action has been taken though such action has had little effect in the past.

The Chairman had heard that travellers might be interested in purchasing land in Risbury in the Poplands Lane area.

**57/25 General Financial Matters - Report from the RFO.
Report from the RFO.**

Bank balances on 11 July 2025 are-

Unity Bank current account £8,749.63

H&R 90 day account £5,001.00

Total £13,750.63

Q1 (April – June 2025) Bank Reconciliation

HFSP CASHBOOK 2025-26								
Date	Details	Receipt	Payment	Classification	Add to Asset Register	VAT	VAT Number	Running Balance
01/04/2025	Balance brought forward	3920.91						3920.91
07/04/2025	Alex Davidson AD0132		300.00	Lengthsman				3620.91
07/04/2025	Alex Davidson AD0131		600.00	Lengthsman				3020.91
17/04/2025	Herefordshire Council precept pt. 1	11348.00		Precept				14368.91
17/04/2025	J P Ltd	400.00		Adverts				14768.91
22/04/2025	Radway Bridge	210.00		Adverts				14978.91
30/04/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges				14972.91
13/05/2025	Golf Grove & Bowl	400.00		Adverts				15372.91
14/05/2025	Matthew Newman	17.50		Adverts				15390.41
20/05/2025	Herefordshire Council. Refund	955.00		Grants				16345.41
27/05/2025	A M Drew Clerk April 25 salary		552.21	Clerk				15793.20
27/05/2025	HMRC PAYE April 25		178.98	Clerk				15614.22
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		37.80	Parish Pump				15576.42
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		25.40	Parish Pump				15551.02
27/05/2025	A M Drew Clerk May 25 salary		552.21	Clerk				14998.81
27/05/2025	Barrington Print INV-13951 May 25 Pump		460.00	Parish Pump				14538.81
27/05/2025	Geosphere mapping		36.00	Administration		20.00%	296312096	14502.81
27/05/2025	Barrington Print INV-13858 April 25 Pump		460.00	Parish Pump				14042.81
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		27.20	Parish Pump				14015.61
27/05/2025	HMRC PAYE May 25		178.98	Clerk		0.00%		13836.63
31/05/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges		0.00%		13830.63
03/06/2025	Zurich Insurance 2025-26		494.50	Insurance, audit,				13336.13
03/06/2025	Lion Court Podiatry TP 82	120.00		Adverts				13456.13
05/06/2025	Thomas Humber W/land of Remem.	120.00		Adverts				13576.13
16/06/2025	Services for Indep. TP83	210.00		Adverts				13786.13
20/06/2025	H&R Building Society		1.00	Out-Transfer				13785.13
23/06/2025	Matthew Newman	17.50		Adverts				13802.63
25/06/2025	H&R Building Society		5000.00	Out-Transfer				8802.63
30/06/2025	Information Commissioner		47.00	Insurance, audit,				8755.63
30/06/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges				8749.63
Apr-Jun	Sub-totals for period (Horiz.)	13798.00	8969.28					
	Sub -totals for period (Vert)	13798.00	8969.28					
	Balance check	8749.63	OK					
	Reconciliation	OK	OK					
	Totals for financial year to date	13798.00	8969.28					

In the Council cash book for quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June 2025) the opening balance is £3920.91. During this first quarter of the year Council received £13,798.00 and paid £8969.28. The balance shown in the cash book (£3920.91+£13798.00-£8969.28=£8749.63) is £8749.63.

The bank statements showing 31 March 2025 and 30 June 2025 follow which confirm both the opening and closing balance for the quarter.

Note that the total balance at the end of the quarter is £8749.63+£5001.00 = £13749.63. The £5001 is the balance in the H&R 90 day deposit account. A letter from the H&R Building Society dated 26th June is attached to confirm this balance.

Signed..... RFO: Allan Drew

Signed..... Chair: Cllr. Fowler-Wright

Signed..... Finance Committee: Cllr. Marston

Dated 16th July 2025

The RFO, and Cllrs. Fowler-Wright & Marston duly signed the reconciliation.

Your Account Statement



For Businesses. For Communities. For Good.

Unity Trust Bank plc
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG

1034638010 | 01375

Mr Allan Drew
Humber Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
HR7 4RL

Date: 30/04/2025

Account Name: Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Swift Code (BIC): NWBKGB2L

IBAN Number: GB93NWBK60023571418024

Sort Code: 608301

Account Number: 20430401

Your arranged overdraft limit is £0.00

Go Paperless! Receive your statements online and we'll notify you by SMS or email when they're available to view. Simply log into Your Online Banking and update your statement preferences or give us a call on 0345 140 1000



1034638010 | 01375 | 00001 | 00004 |

Contact Us

- Call us: **0345 140 1000**
- Email us: **us@unity.co.uk**
- Visit us: **unity.co.uk**



For eligible organisations, your deposits held with Unity Trust Bank are protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). For more information about eligibility and compensation provided by the FSCS, please visit: **FSCS.org.uk** or refer to our FSCS Information Sheet and Exclusions List at **unity.co.uk/fscs**

Your Current T1 account transactions:					
Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
31/03/2025		Balance brought forward	£0.00	£0.00	£3,920.91
07/04/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Alex Davidson	£300.00	£0.00	£3,620.91
07/04/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Alex Davidson	£600.00	£0.00	£3,020.91
17/04/2025	Credit	HCC CREDITORS	£0.00	£11,348.00	£14,368.91

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Statement number 071

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Your Account Statement



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Unity Trust Bank plc
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG

1042515011 | 01362

Mr Allan Drew
Humber Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
HR7 4RL

Date: 30/06/2025

Account Name: Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Swift Code (BIC): NWBKGB2L

IBAN Number: GB93NWBK60023571418024

Sort Code: 608301

Account Number: 20430401

Your arranged overdraft limit is £0.00

Go Paperless! Receive your statements online and we'll notify you by SMS or email when they're available to view. Simply log into Your Online Banking and update your statement preferences or give us a call on 0345 140 1000



1042515011 | 01362 | 00001 | 00004 |

Contact Us

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- Email us: **us@unity.co.uk**
- Visit us: **unity.co.uk**



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Your Current T1 account transactions:					
Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
31/05/2025		Balance brought forward	£0.00	£0.00	£13,830.63
03/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Zurich Insurance	£494.50	£0.00	£13,336.13
03/06/2025	Credit	LION COURT PODIATRY AND ASSOCIATES	£0.00	£120.00	£13,456.13
05/06/2025	Credit	THOMAS H W OF R	£0.00	£120.00	£13,576.13

Page number 1 of 3

Statement number 073

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Your Current T1 account transactions:					
Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
16/06/2025	Transfer	SERVICES FOR INDEP	£0.00	£210.00	£13,786.13
20/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£1.00	£0.00	£13,785.13
23/06/2025	Credit	Matthew Newman	£0.00	£17.50	£13,802.63
25/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£5,000.00	£0.00	£8,802.63
30/06/2025	Direct Debit	Direct Debit (ICO)	£47.00	£0.00	£8,755.63
30/06/2025	Fee	Service Charge	£6.00	£0.00	£8,749.63

Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
30/06/2025	Credit	THOMAS W O'R	£0.00	£17.50	£13,802.63
25/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£5,000.00	£0.00	£8,802.63
30/06/2025	Direct Debit	Direct Debit (ICO)	£47.00	£0.00	£8,755.63
30/06/2025	Fee	Service Charge	£6.00	£0.00	£8,749.63



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H&R Building Society account balance advice



Upper Bond Street
Hinckley
LE10 1NZ
Telephone: 0800 434 6343
Website: hrbs.co.uk

Mr A Drew, Mr H Fowler-Wright & Mr T Yair
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
Herefordshire
HR7 4RL

26th June 2025

Dear Mr Drew, Mr Fowler-Wright & Mr Yair

Your new Local Council 90 Day Notice Deposit Account

Thank you for opening a new account with the Society. Your new account details and opening balance are:

Open Date	-	3rd June 2025
Account Balance	-	£5,001.00
Account Number	-	17011058123

To pay money into your account online or set up a regular Standing Order, use these details:

Account type: Business account

Account name: The account name of your organisation

Sort Code: 40-05-30

Account Number: 74575938

Reference or roll number: Your 11-digit Hinckley & Rugby account number, shown above. Without this, we will not be able to allocate the money to your account, and it will be returned to sender.

Please note that withdrawals can only be made by electronic funds transfer and can only be withdrawn to the council's nominated bank account.

Withdrawals are subject to a 90-day notice period and must be made within 14 days of the notice period becoming effective. Instant withdrawals (outside of the notice period) are not permitted under the term and conditions of this account. The total amount on notice of withdrawal at any time must not be more than the balance of the account.

You can give notice of a withdrawal at any of our branches or agencies, by calling our Customer Service Team on 0800 434 6343, or by posting a signed letter to the branch or to our head office. You can also give notice of a withdrawal of up to £25,000 on our H&R Online service (if you are registered).

When the notice becomes effective, withdrawals of up to £250,000 will be processed on the first business day of the 14-day withdrawal window, and credited to your nominated bank account the same business day. No charge will be made for this service.

Withdrawals over £250,000 are sent by telegraphic transfer (CHAPs). There is a charge for this service; please refer to the current tariff of charges in the Interest Rates for Savers leaflet or on the Society's website.

H&R Online

Our H&R Online service offers many useful features. For withdrawal requests, any one signatory can make the request to transfer funds to your nominated bank account. To register for H&R Online, please visit our website hrbs.co.uk and click the **H&R Online** button to begin your registration process.

Other information

The following documents have been shared with you before: Savings Terms and Conditions, Deposit Guarantee Scheme, Customer Privacy Notice, and the declaration you signed for your new account. You can also view these documents at hrbs.co.uk/important-savings-information or by visiting your local branch.

If you need any help, or if you would like more information about our range of accounts, please contact us on **01455 250959** or hinckleybranch@hrbs.co.uk or visit your local branch.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Tebbutt
Senior Customer Assistant
Hinckley Branch

Quarter 1 Budget Monitor

BUDEGET MONITOR			2025-26			
		OUTTURN 2024-25	BUDGET	YEAR TO DATE	FORECAST OUTTURN	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET
1	Precept	15322.00	22696.00	11348.00	22696.00	0.00
2	Pump Advertising	2487.00	2750.00	1495.00	2750.00	0.00
3	Pump Postage	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00
4	Grants	6317.63	10000.00	955.00	13300.00	3300.00
5	Other Income	3104.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	VAT Reclaim	2097.15	1967.00	0.00	1967.00	0.00
7	CW Fundraising	695.38	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
8	Other Projects	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	TOTAL INCOME	30313.16	37953.00	13798.00	41253.00	3300.00
EXPENDITURE						
10	Clerk	4969.68	8836.00	1462.38	8536.00	300.00
11	Administration	1025.14	500.00	48.00	500.00	0.00
12	Insurance, audit, professional	1294.64	1600.00	541.50	541.50	1058.50
13	Website & IT	553.49	900.00	0.00	900.00	0.00
14	Hire of Halls	210.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00
15	Training and development	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Equipment	654.93	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
17	Maintenance	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
18	HMRC	3557.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	Other	1738.87	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	14004.48	12286.00	2051.88	10677.50	1608.50
PROJECTS						
21	War Memorial	60.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	Parish Pump	5350.00	5100.00	1010.40	5100.00	0.00
23	Lengthsman	355.00	14752.00	900.00	14752.00	0.00
24	Community Week	496.67	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
25	Environment Project	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
26	Road Safety	4958.98	5000.00	0.00	5000.00	0.00
27	Welcome pack		0.00		0.00	0.00
28	Trails Booklet	821.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
29	Project B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	Project C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
31					0.00	
32	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	12041.65	25352.00	1910.40	25352.00	0.00
33	Reclaimable VAT on the above	1966.97	3000	6.00	3000.00	0.00
				0.00		
34	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	28013.10	40638.00	3968.28	39029.50	1608.50
35	SURPLUS	4267.03	315.00	9829.72	5223.50	4908.50

Notes for budget monitor Q1 2025-26

NOTES FOR Q1 BUDGET MONITOR 2024-25	
1	As agreed at meeting 15 January 2025. Increase to create drainage reserve of £10,000
2	
3	Nominal amount
4	Lengthsman scheme updated to include £2376 base grant & £1188 match funded Nominated Task. Applications for drainage grant of £5000 and PROW grant of £5000 will be made.
5	
6	
7	Estimate only
8	
9	
10	Based on Clerk's gross salary for 2025-26 plus arrears ~£300 for 2024-25)
11	Budget in line with normal spend. (Last year £600 for L/man advert)
12	Budget increased by £300 due to sharp and unexpected rise in insurance premium
13	New PC + some soft ware in readiness for W11.
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	Now included with Clerk line 10
19	
20	
21	Project closed
22	Price to be held at £460/issue for 11 issues + some misc. items (stamps etc.)
23	AMP £2376; Nom Task £2376 (incl. Parish match funding); Drainage £5000; PROW £5000
24	Estimate similar to 2024-25
25	No spend last year. Council to agree way forward on this project.
26	Budget set at £5000 as for last year.
27	Project closed
28	Project closed
29	
30	
31	
32	
33	VAT estimate based on increased Lengthsman works
34	
35	Surplus is calculated on ex-VAT costs. Note that funds to be used to create £10,000 drainage reserve

The RFO explained his thinking around the budget in particular that Grants (line 4) look as if they might be higher for this year. So total income then might well be higher than budget.

Payments for Authorisation

Payments made since last meeting.					
No.	Name	Ex-VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's April 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's May 2025 salary payable 25 May 2025
3	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13951 May 25 Pump
4	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13858 April 25 Pump
5	Geosphere	30.00	6.00	36.00	Parish online mapping services
6	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/04/2025 PAYE
7	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/05/2025 PAYE
	TOTAL	2412.38	6.00	2583.38	

Income received since last meeting –			
No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Herefordshire Council	955.00	Refund for drainage projects 2024-25
2	Lion Court Podiatry	120.00	Pump Advert
3	Thomas Humber W/land	120.00	Pump Advert
4	Services for Indep.	210.00	Pump Advert
5	Matthew Newman	17.50	Pump Advert
	TOTAL	1422.50	

Payments for Authorisation					
No.	Name	Ex VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	June 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	July 2025 salary, due 25th July
3	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-14066 June 2025 Pump
4	Barrington Print	448.00	0.00	448.00	INV-14209 July 2025 Pump
6	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	PAYE June 2025
7	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	PAYE July 2025
6	SLCC	183.00	0.00	183.00	Annual subscription
	TOTAL	2553.38	0.00	2553.38	

The RFO had received two additional invoices one for £375+VAT for the new W11 laptop (from CSS Computers) and the other from Gwent Web Design for £120+VAT for the hosting charge for the Council website. He asked that Council authorise these additional payments. Council authorised these payments of £2553.38+£375.00+£120.00 + VAT as appropriate. (Total £3147.38)

58/25 Annual Business from Forward Plan 2025-26

The business carried over from the May meeting and scheduled for this meeting is-

- adoption of new model Standing Orders as recommended by HALC Internal Audit
- updates to all Council (non-GDPR) policies.
- committees & membership

Update to Standing Orders

At the 2024-25 Internal Audit HALC stated that Council's Standing Orders were now quite old (though they have been reviewed every year and updates made). It was recommended that Council adopts the model Standing Orders published by NALC, which was something that had been intended anyway.

The basic set of Model Standing Orders requires Council to make choices about the specific wording. The Clerk had reviewed all these choices, summarised them in a table and recommended which wording Council could adopt. Council discussed these recommendations and mostly accepted them with three exceptions where minor changes were agreed. Council then resolved to adopt the new set of Standing Orders which are contained in appendix 1 to these minutes.

Update to non-GDPR policies

Council has the following policies which are non-GDPR.

Policy	General Description	Last Review	Last Update	Recommendation
Grievance Procedure	For employees with a grievance against the Council as an employer	2022	N/A	New policy drafted for consideration
Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	Management of employee performance and misconduct	2022	N/A	New updated policy drafted for consideration
HFSP Equalities policy May 2025	To comply with Council obligations under the Equalities Act 2010	2025	2022	No changes proposed
HFSP Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee meetings May 2025	To comply with legislation promoting openness and transparency in Council business	2025	N/A	No changes proposed
HFSP Complaints Procedure Jan2013 amended May 2025	Complaints from residents to Council regarding Council administration, procedures or against Council employees.,	2025	2025 Contact details updated	No changes proposed
HFSP Publication Scheme Schedule Classes of Information as amended May 2025	The information available from Council concerning all aspects of its activities	2025	2025	Details updated particularly around financial information
HFSP Safeguarding Statement	To ensure all facilities and activities offered by Council limit risk to children, young people and adults at risks.	2025	2023	All links and references in the statement are still valid. No changes required.

All these policies have been reviewed and in the case of the Grievance Procedure and the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure recent updates to employment law meant that new policies/procedures would be the most effective route to improvement. A draft Grievance Procedure and a draft Disciplinary Policy & Procedure were discussed and a number of amendments considered and agreed. The finalised Grievance Procedure is at appendix 2 and the finalised Disciplinary Policy & Procedure is at appendix 3. Both policies were adopted by Council.

The Chairman confirmed with Members that the remaining non-GDPR policies were satisfactory and required no further discussion.

Committees & Membership.

The roles as agreed for 2024-25 are shown below. Following discussion Council agreed these roles would remain unchanged for 2025-26.

Council Committees

- a) Planning Committee
Current members of the committee are Chairman & vice-Chairman (ex-officio), Cllrs. Bemand, Marston, Fullwood and Grace.
- (b) Community Week Committee
Current Members - the Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio, Margaret Brown (Secretary and Treasurer) and any other member of the community wishing to attend.

- (c) Finance Committee
Current Members - the RFO, Cllr Tim Yair and Cllr. Chris Marston.

Membership of other bodies and representatives 2025-26

Current subscriptions to other bodies are-
HALC ~£700/year
CPRE £36/year
Parish Online £36/year
SLCC ~£118
Council resolved these subscriptions should continue

To appoint Councillors to the following positions-

Risbury Village Hall Committee representative: currently Cllr. Harris
Stoke Prior Village Hall Committee representative: currently Cllr. Fulwood
Police Liaison Officer: currently Cllr. Fowler-Wright.
Safeguarding Officer: currently Cllr. Yair
Humber Close Liaison Officer currently Cllr. Grace
Public Rights of Way Officers: Iain Cholerton assisted by Cllr. Harris (bridleways), Philip Brown (Humber) and Cllr. Sneyd (Stoke Prior)

59/25 Lengthsman & PROW

Council's new Lengthsman has submitted quotations to carry out a program of work on PROWs based on the PFOs annual reports. The quotations follow and in total amount to £2750

PROW-Stoke Prior	Action Required	Estimate
SP1	More details required – site visit required to outline the work that needs to be done.	Unknown – further information is required.
SP2	Clear the route & signage	£280
SP4	Replace broken post and add signage.	£240
SP31	Clearance of undergrowth, check bridge and handrail for defects and safety.	£180
SP31	Improve signage and clear path.	£280
FD4	Improve signage across the golf course.	£60
TOTAL		£1040

PROW-Humber	Action Required	Estimate
HU13	Straighten and support fingerpost sign and clear vegetation.	£60
HU3	Stile / gate 1 - is in need of repair and signage added.	£320
HU3	Bridge 2 – in need of repair	Inspection is required.
HU3	Stile 4 and 5 – overgrowth, path clearance. Stile 6 – Stile needs replacing.	£380
HU5	Stile 2- Minor repairs.	£120
HU6	Stile 1- Replace stile.	£320
HU6	Stile 6 – Replace stile.	£320
HU7	Waymarker post required	£40
PG12	Clearance of undergrowth	£150
TOTAL		£1710

Council accepted the quotations and the Lengthsman has been instructed to carry out this work.

The Lengthsman has also been instructed to carry out work on the annual maintenance plan

The Chairman raised the longstanding problem of SP1 which disappeared over 20 years ago as a result of a landslip. The Clerk recounted his attempts to engage Herefordshire PROW on the problem but had been unsuccessful. Council discussed legal remedies to this problem using section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 and although this would be a last resort, it was not ruled out.

The Clerk would make another attempt to get a site meeting with PROW.

The Clerk has asked Cllr. Sneyd for further details on SP13 overcropping to find the landowner.

Cllr. Fullwood reported that she had asked Colin Smith the Locality Steward if the Prill pipe under the road in the village centre had been cleared. A BB team had attempted clearance but had encountered an obstruction and said a camera survey was necessary. The Clerk contacted Colin Smith for an update and received the following response-

Good afternoon,

I have checked job no. 41703843. It appears that the jetting crew went out on 1st July and completed the job at 08.12 hrs. There is not any mention of an inline blockage in the notes.

Kind regards,

Sue Matthews

Customer Service Administrator | Balfour Beatty Living Places | Herefordshire

At some time in the near future the Lengthsman will need a camera team to support his work program and it is suggested that the Prill pipe is checked when the team is in the area.

Cllr. Yair mentioned there was an unexpected road closure near Old Hall but these signs have now been removed.

60/25 The Lamb Inn

There was no specific update provided on The Lamb Inn other than that Keiran Wyldes has now received the keys for the Inn.

61/25 Current projects

Traffic Management Plan Cllrs. Grace & Marston

In Cllr. Grace's absence Cllr. Marston reported that a formal meeting of the A44 TSG would be called in the near future. Also following the last site meeting Herefordshire would arrange re-painting of the white lines at Humber Close/A44 junction. This has not yet happened and would be urged.

Environment Cllrs. Yair & Hinton

Cllrs. Yair and Hinton had met with BB and a drainage consultancy to discuss the inadequate drainage at Steensbridge on the A44. The flooding problem was sufficient to trigger a Herefordshire response and the group would see what could be achieved to mitigate water ingress. Currently there is little hope that much progress would be made, although BB seemed inclined to implement some simple mitigation measures which might well make a difference.

62/25 Matters for discussion at the next meeting

Annual Business from Forward Plan

Financial Regulations
Non-GDPR policies
Role of Councillors

Date of next meeting

To note: the next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior village hall

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Standing Orders

Drafted	2025
Adopted	16 July 2025
Review Period	Annual
Last Reviewed	N/A
Next Review	2026
Author	NALC + Allan Drew, Clerk

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The standing orders do not include financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. financial regulations are available to councils in membership of NALC.

DRAFTING NOTES

standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning. Standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. It is NALC's view that all model standing orders will generally be suitable for councils.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights. standing orders use gender-neutral language (e.g. "Chair").

A model standing order that includes brackets like this '()' requires information to be inserted by a council. A model standing order that includes brackets like this '[]' and the term 'OR' provides alternative options for a council to choose from when determining standing orders.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their 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 chair 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 chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the 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 chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

- Full Council meetings ●
- 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 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.**
- 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 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 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 chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i 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 their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- 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 Chair of the Council may in**

their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).

- p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside 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 chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

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

- 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 their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**

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 their 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 2.5 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 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair 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 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their 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 Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any 2 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 4 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 chair of the meeting.

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

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- 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 chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d **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.**
- e 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 they have 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. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless they have 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. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they 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 Principal Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

b

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 3 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;

(see also standing order 23);

- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting or a meeting of the Planning Committee if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

(see also standing order 23).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the 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 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

- i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below [60,000] due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- d. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to standing order 11.

- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Clerk shall notify the chair of the absence occasioned by illness or other reason and the Clerk shall report such absence to the next Council meeting.
- c The chair or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution of the Council.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Clerk shall contact the Council chair in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Council, this shall be communicated to another member of the Council, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

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

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their 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.]**
The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.

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 4 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.

The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Grievance Procedure

Drafted	July 2025
Adopted	16 July 2025
Review Period	2 Years
Next Review	2027
Author	Allan Drew, Clerk

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Informal grievance procedure

In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee is encouraged to first discuss any grievance with the Chair of the Parish Council, with a view to resolving the matter informally if possible (and appropriate). If the employee feels that this is not appropriate or they wish to pursue a formal grievance they should follow the procedure detailed below.

2. Formal grievance procedure

2.1 The employee must set out their grievance in writing (“Statement of Grievance”) and provide a copy to the Chair.

2.2 The vice-Chair will arrange a specially convened subcommittee of the Parish Council to discuss the matter and invite the employee to attend that meeting. The employee should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. Grievance meetings will normally be convened within 14 days of the Council receiving the Statement of Grievance. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a representative or colleague. If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or their representative, the employee has the right to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

2.3 A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the subcommittee time to consider the fairest outcome.

2.4 Within 5 working days of that meeting the employee will be informed of the subcommittee’s decision. This decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

2.5 If the employee wishes to appeal against the Council’s decision they must inform the Chairman within 5 working days of receiving the decision.

2.6 The employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting. The appeal will be heard by three Councillors who were not involved with the original hearing/decision. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a representative or colleague.

2.7 A grievance appeal meeting will normally be convened within 15 working days of the Chairman receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 2.5 above. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion, the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

2.8 After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the final decision within 5 working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

3 Modified Council grievance procedure for former employees

3.1 If an ex-employee wishes to raise a grievance, they must set out their grievance and the basis for that grievance in writing to the Chair.

3.2 Following receipt of a statement of grievance as in 3.1 above, the Chair will write to the ex-employee inviting them to choose one of the following-

attend a meeting to discuss the grievance,

or

have the Parish Council respond to the grievance in writing.

If the ex-employee does not agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence then within 7 working days of that choice the above steps 2.1 to 2.4 of the standard council grievance procedure will be followed

If the ex-employee does agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence, the Council will consider his or her grievance. Council will inform the ex-employee in writing within 14 days of the receipt of such confirmation setting out the basis for the Council's decision.

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Drafted	2025
Adopted	16 July 2025
Review Period	5 Years
Last Reviewed	N/A
Next Review	2030
Author	Allan Drew, Clerk

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

- 1 This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice (<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174>).
- 2 It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf
- 3 The policy is designed to help Council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their job. Wherever possible, the Council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.
- 4 The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5 This policy confirms:
 - informal coaching and supervision will be considered, where appropriate, to improve conduct and / or attendance
 - the Council will fully investigate the facts of each case
 - the Council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective. For more information see ACAS "Performance Management" at <https://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6608>
 - employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case
 - employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing
 - employees may be accompanied or represented by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official - at any investigatory, disciplinary or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. Employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make written submissions
 - if the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within 7 calendar days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
 - any changes to specified time limits in the Council's procedure must be agreed by the employee and the Council
 - information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the Council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition

- employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision. The appeal decision is final
- if an employee who is already subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure
- disciplinary action taken by the Council can include a written warning, final written warning or dismissal
- this procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this
- except for gross misconduct when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the Council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct
- if an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The Council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it,
- the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the consent of affected parties

Examples of misconduct

6 Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct: The list is not exhaustive.

- unauthorised absence
- poor timekeeping
- misuse of the Council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet
- inappropriate behaviour
- refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- breach of health and safety rules.

Examples of gross misconduct

7 Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct: The list is not exhaustive

- bullying, discrimination and harassment
- incapacity at work because of alcohol or drugs
- violent behaviour
- fraud or theft
- gross negligence
- gross insubordination
- serious breaches of council policies and procedures e.g. the Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection Policy and any policies regarding the use of information technology
- serious and deliberate damage to property
- use of the internet or email to access pornographic, obscene or offensive material
- disclosure of confidential information.

Suspension

8 If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may suspend the employee while further investigations are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does

not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.

- 9 While on suspension, the employee is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council needs to make contact. The employee must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or to discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.
- 10 The employee must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

Examples of unsatisfactory work performance

- 11 The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance: The list is not exhaustive.
 - inadequate application of management instructions/office procedures
 - inadequate IT skills
 - unsatisfactory management of staff
 - unsatisfactory communication skills.

The Procedure

- 12 Preliminary enquiries. The council may make preliminary enquiries to establish the basic facts of what has happened in order to understand whether there may be a case to answer under the disciplinary procedure.
- 13 If the employee's manager believes there may be a disciplinary case to answer, the council may initiate a more detailed investigation undertaken to establish the facts of a situation or to establish the perspective of others who may have witnessed misconduct. Should the employee not have a line manager (e.g. the Clerk) then the Council Chair will form a subcommittee (the staffing committee) of three Councillors to establish the facts
- 14 Informal Procedures. Where minor concerns about conduct become apparent, it is the manager's responsibility to raise this with the employee and clarify the improvements required. A file note will be made and kept by the manager. The informal discussions are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. If the conduct fails to improve, or if further matters of conduct become apparent, the manager may decide to formalise the discussions and invite the employee to a first stage disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary investigation

- 15 A formal disciplinary investigation may sometimes be required to establish the facts and whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.
- 16 If a formal disciplinary investigation is required, the Council's staffing committee will appoint an Investigator who will be responsible for undertaking a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The Investigator will be independent and will normally be a councillor. If the staffing committee considers that there are no councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council. The Investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The staffing committee will inform the Investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should specify:
 - the allegations or events that the investigation is required to examine

- whether a recommendation is required
 - how the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a written report
 - who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.
- 17 The Investigator will be asked to submit their findings usually within 35 Calendar days of appointment where possible. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory performance or of allegations of minor misconduct, the appointment of an investigator may not be necessary and the Council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage - the disciplinary meeting (see paragraph 22).
- 18 The staffing committee will notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and details of the person undertaking the investigation. The employee may be asked to meet an investigator as part of the disciplinary investigation. The employee will be given sufficient notice of the meeting with the Investigator so that they have reasonable time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of that process. The employee will be provided with a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure. The Council will also inform the employee that when they meets with the Investigator, they will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.
- 19 Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting.
- 20 If there are other persons (e.g. employees, councillors, members of the public or the Council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the Investigator should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.
- 21 The Investigator has no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the staffing committee whether or not disciplinary action should be considered under the policy.
- 22 The Investigator's report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:
- the employee has no case to answer and there should no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure
 - the matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally or
 - the employee has a case to answer and a formal hearing should be convened under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- 23 The Investigator will submit the report to the staffing committee which will decide whether further action will be taken.
- 24 If the Council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The disciplinary meeting

- 25 If the staffing committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a staffing sub-committee of 3 councillors, to formally hear the allegations. The staffing sub-committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. The Investigator shall not sit on the sub-committee.
- 26 No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The sub-committee's letter will confirm the following:
- the names of its Chair and other two members

- details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting
- a copy of the information provided to the sub-committee which may include the investigation report, supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure
- the time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that they has sufficient time to prepare for it
- that witnesses may attend on the employee's and the Council's behalf and that both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least 2 working days before the meeting
- that the employee may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official

27 The purpose of the disciplinary meeting hearing is for the allegations to be put to the employee and then for the employee to give their perspective. It will be conducted as follows:

- the Chair will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee and explain the arrangements for the hearing
- the Chair will set out the allegations and invite the Investigator to present the findings of the investigation report (if there has been a previous investigation)
- the Chair will invite the employee to present their account
- the employee (or the companion) will set out their case and present evidence (including any witnesses and/or witness statements)
- any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the Investigator and any witness
- the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up

28 The Chair will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The Chair will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision.

29 The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be further investigated by the sub-committee.

Disciplinary action

30 If the sub-committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

First written warning

31 If the employee's conduct has fallen beneath acceptable standards, a first written warning will be issued. A first written warning will set out:

- the reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
- the employee's right of appeal
- that a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Final written warning

32 If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve sufficiently during the currency of a prior warning, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- the reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
- the employee's right of appeal
- that a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Dismissal

33 The Council may dismiss:

- for gross misconduct
- if there is no improvement within the specified time period, in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning
- if another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force.

34 The Council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, they will receive a written statement of the reasons for their dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of their right of appeal. If the sub-committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action taken as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal

35 An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. Their written notice of appeal must be received by the Council within 7 calendar days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.

36 The grounds for appeal include;

- a failure by the Council to follow its disciplinary policy
- the sub-committee's disciplinary decision was not supported by the evidence
- the disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case
- new evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting.

37 Where possible, the appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the Investigator. There may be insufficient members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of 3 members of the Council who may include members of the staff committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.

38 The employee will be notified, in writing, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

39 At the appeal meeting, the Chair will:

- introduce the panel members to the employee
- explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the disciplinary decision
- explain the action that the appeal panel may take.

40 The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds for appeal.

- 41 The Chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.
- 42 The appeal panel may decide to uphold the disciplinary decision of the staffing committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file.
- 43 If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved.
- 44 The appeal panel's decision is final.