



**MEMBERS OF ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND
THE MEETING OF ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL
AT THE BRIDEWELL, THE BURY, ODIHAM, HAMPSHIRE, RG29 1NB
TUESDAY 21st JANUARY 2025 at 8pm**

15th January 2025

Andrea Mann, Clerk

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person or online

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89488799361?pwd=fi6t0SdUdh7yy2wGCUw4DZf0Mmsfwm.1>

Meeting ID: 894 8879 9361

Passcode: 907637

-
- 234/24 To receive apologies for absence**
- 235/24 To receive declarations of interests and requests for dispensation relating to any item on the agenda**
- 236/24 Approval of minutes**
To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th December 2024 (211-233/24).
- 237/24 Chair's announcements**
- 238/24 Public session**
An opportunity for residents to raise questions and issues within the Parish in accordance with Standing Orders. Please view details at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council/policies-and-publications> or contact the Parish Office for further advice.

Councillor Reports

- 239/24 Meeting reports from councillors**
To RECEIVE any verbal reports from Councillors on their attendance at outside meetings.
- 240/24 Reports from other councils**
To RECEIVE any verbal reports from Hart District councillors and the Hampshire County councillor representing Odiham.

General

- 241/24 Meeting action points (pages 4-5)**
To consider matters arising from the Minutes not elsewhere on the agenda
- 242/24 Policies (pages 6)**
i) To review the schedule of policies and recommendations (in red) (page 6).
ii) To review the Scheme of Delegation (pages 7-10).
iii) To carry out the annual review of Standing Orders, as required for auditing purposes (pages 11-31).
- 243/24 OPC's Risk Assessment (pages 32-38)**
To complete and agree the annual review of OPC's risk assessment, as required as part of the audit process.



- 244/24 Line markings outside The Bridewell (pages 39-40)**
Following a site meeting with a representative from the HCC traffic management team, to agree OPC's preference for line markings adjacent to The Bridewell.
- 245/24 Government open consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England (pages 41-67)**
[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)
To consider a response. Proposed responses are shown in red.
- 246/24 New projects proposed by Odiham Society (email circulated to councillors)**
To consider two new project proposals:
i) Village sign.
ii) A project to replace the fallen oak tree known as Frenchman's oak on Odiham Common (Hart DC land).

Amenity Areas Matters

- 247/24 Parish Room – eastern wall (details and photos forwarded to members separately)**
i) To receive correspondence from the Odiham Society regarding paintwork on the eastern wall and request for action.
ii) To consider impact on the draft 2025-26 budget.
- 248/24 Grounds maintenance contract covering OPC's open spaces (to follow)**
To consider contract award for the period 01.04.25-31.03.28. Papers will be circulated to members separately due to interviews with the shortlisted contractors taking place 15.01.25.
- 249/24 Cemetery Grounds maintenance contract covering OPC's open spaces (to follow)**
To consider contract award for the period 01.04.25-31.03.28. Papers will be circulated to members separately due to interviews with the shortlisted contractors taking place 15.01.25.

Community Committee Matters

- 250/24 Community Grant applications (page 68)**
To consider grant applications received, as set out in the Deputy Clerk's agenda report.
- 251/24 Councillor surgeries**
To consider holding councillor surgeries to provide local residents with an opportunity meet their local Councillors face-to-face and discuss a local issue. Councillors' surgeries are also an opportunity for the council to receive feedback on services and signpost residents to services and activities run by external organisations.
- The proposed frequency is quarterly, held at The Bridewell, with 2 weekday morning sessions, one early evening weekday (before a council meeting) and one Saturday morning during a Book Exchange session.

Financial Matters

- 252/24 2025/26 Budget (pages 69-79)**
To consider and approve Odiham Parish Council's 2025/26 budget, as proposed by the Finance Committee.



- 253/24 2025/26 Precept (page 70, publication)**
To consider and approve Odiham Parish Council's 2025/26 precept which will be signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- 254/24 Payments Listing (to follow)**
To approve the payments listing for the period 18th December-21st January 2025 and appoint 2 Councillors to complete the payment approval process for outstanding payments.

Planning Matters

- 255/24 Ratification of Planning & Development Committee decisions**
To ratify the decisions of the recent Planning & Development Committee 07.01.25.
<https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council-business/council/planning/planning-development-committee>
- 256/24 Odiham & North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan review (page 80)**
To note the timetable for the Referendum.
- 257/24 Date of next meeting - Tuesday 18th February 2025**
- 258/24 To pass a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press to consider confidential contractual and staffing matters which meet the criteria of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Part 1**
- 259/24 Verbal update on negotiations with local organisation to occupy offices at The Bridewell**
- 260/24 Verbal update from the interview panel on the recruitment process for an Amenity Officer**

Full Council				
Date of meeting	Agenda ref no	Cllr to action	Details	Status
OUTSTANDING ON-GOING ITEMS				
Sep-24	124/24	Clerk	Change previous minutes from draft and add to website.	Complete
	126/24	Clerk	Send follow up email to RAF re events to commemorate 100 years of flight at RAF Odiham.	Complete
	128/24ib	HDC Cllr Hale/Clerk	Brief OPC on HDC's plans for 126/24.	
	131/24	Deputy Clerk	Promote agreed action plan for war memorial improvements.	Complete
	132/24	Clerk	Add revised policies to website - casual vacancy & co-option, environment & climate change and community use of OPC's land & equipment.	Complete
	133/24	Clerk	Write to property owners next to Stoney Alley and Terry's Alley seeking consent to install directional signs to The Bury facilities.	Enquiries in progress
		Clerk/OdSoc	Arrange the purchase and installation of new signage.	Enquiries in progress
	134/24	Clerk	Refer Alton Rd bus shelter to next meeting.	Complete
	135/24	Deputy Clerk	Pay grant awards and notify recipients - Citizens Advice and InOdiham for Extravaganza.	Complete
	136/24i	Office	Complete Autumn newsletter.	Complete
	136/24ivb	All	Submit names for guest list for drinks reception 28.11.24.	Complete
	137/24	Clerk	Refer 80th anniversary of VE-Day celebrations to next agenda.	Complete
	139/24i	Clerk	Award contract to 24-25 internal auditor.	Complete
	140/24	C/DC/CllrLC/CllrPV	Set up payments on Unity Trust and login to approve payments.	Complete
	142/24	Clerk	Submit OPC's planning application comments to HDC.	Complete
	144/24	Clerk	Submit OPC's response to the Government's consultation on NPPF reforms.	Complete
	148/24	Clerk	Refer calculation on ongoing maintenance costs for POS to next agenda following site meeting.	Complete
Oct-24	151/24	Clerk	Change previous minutes from draft and add to website.	Complete
	156/24	All	Put forward names for Christmas tree lights' switch on invite list.	Complete
	157/24	CllrsLC/PV/Clerk	Meet with Hart Conservation Officers re Bridewell future vision plans and report back.	Complete
	158/24i	Clerk	Add revised Staff Handbook to website and circulate.	Complete
	158/24ii	Clerk	Add revised Pensions Discretion Policy to website and supply copy to Hampshire Pension Fund.	Complete
	159/24	Clerk	Update members at next meeting on progress of new bus shelter on Alton Road.	See below
	160/24i	Clerk	Award contract to clear spoil and vegetation from Mildmay boundary in cemetery.	Complete
			Complete works.	Complete
	160/24ii	Clerk	Award contract to level 4 rows of burial plots.	Complete
			Request donation of topsoil from Topsoil UK.	Complete
			Complete works.	Scheduled Jan '25
	160/24iii	Clerk	Award contract for safety surfacing repairs at Bufton Field playground.	Complete
			Complete works.	Complete
	161/24	Clerk	Publish online consultation on re-configuring King St toilets to provide accessible cubicle.	Complete
	162/24	Office	Set up working group to research and make proposals for a local event to commemorate 80th anniversary of D-Day 08.05.25.	Pending decision of RAF event
	163/24	C/DC/CllrLC/CllrPV	Set up payments on Unity Trust and login to approve payments.	Complete
	164/24	Clerk	Publish Q2 payments listing on website and complete Q2 VAT return.	Complete
	165/24	Clerk plus 2 bank signatories	Complete £50k investment from Unity Trust to CCLA.	Complete
	167/24i	Deputy Clerk	Order new office furniture.	Complete
			Accept delivery and set up.	Complete
	167/24ii	Deputy Clerk	Award contract for the rotation of 2 SIDs.	Complete
			Implement new contract.	Complete. Fault identified with battery - under review.
	168/24	Clerk	Change P&D minutes on website to FINAL.	Complete
	169/24	Clerk/Amc	Sign response letter to NP Examiner and forward to HDC planning.	Complete
	170/24	Clerk	Confirm in writing to Odiham Tennis Club OPC's support for new clubhouse.	Complete
	171/24	Clerk	Forward OPC's request for S106 contributions form the Hook Rd development sites to HDC planning.	Complete
	174/24	Clerk	Increase POS maintenance calculations by 5% annual uplift and forward to HDC.	Complete
	176/24	Clerk/AMc	Implement decisions of the Staffing Committee 09.10.24.	Complete
Nov-24	186/24i&ii	Clerk	Change previous minutes from draft and add to website.	Complete
	193/24i-v	Clerk	Finalise all finance related policies and add to website.	Complete
	194/24	Clerk	Submit OPC's response to the Government's consultation on enabling remote attendance at meetings & proxy voting.	Complete
	195/24	Clerk	Confirm HCC's final approval and write to neighbouring properties to notify them of the forthcoming bus shelter works.	HCC confirmed. Awaiting works date before writing.
	196/24	Clerk	Finalise ground maintenance and cemetery grounds maintenance contracts and publish on Contracts Finder.	Complete
	197/24	Deputy Clerk	Award contract to Playscene to paint multi-play unit at Rec.	Complete
		Deputy Clerk	Complete works.	Scheduled before Christmas. Weather dependent.
	198/24	Clerk/Deputy Clerk	Update website with revised allotment fees from 01.04.25.	Complete
		Clerk/Deputy Clerk	Notify all tenants in advance of increase.	Scheduled Jan '25
	199/24	Deputy Clerk	Update website with revised cemetery fees from 01.04.25.	Complete
	201/24	Clerk	Publish 2025 events on website.	Complete

Full Council				
Date of meeting	Agenda ref no	Cllr to action	Details	Status
OUTSTANDING ON-GOING ITEMS				
	201/24ii	Clerk/CllrCG	Liaise with RAF Odiham re 2025 event.	Enquiries in progress
	202/24	C/DC/CllrLC/CllrPV	Set up payments on Unity Trust and login to approve payments.	Complete
	203/24	Clerk	Publish decision not to claim a members' allowance on website.	Complete
	204/24	Clerk	Change draft planning minutes to final on website.	Complete
	207/24	Clerk	Submit OPC's representation to planning Appeal 23/02063/OUT to Planning Inspectorate and cc Hart.	Complete
		Deputy Clerk	Cllr Verdon to attend Hart planning meeting 20.11.24 to support layout and change of housing design for 2 Hook Rd developments.	Complete
	210/24	Clerk	Notify Hart of OPC's resolution on a calculation for a commuted sum for management of a public open space.	Complete
Dec-24	213/24	Clerk	Change previous minutes from draft and add to website.	Complete
	216/34ii	Clerk	Agree proposed plan for parking outside Bridewell.	On agenda
	219/24	Bridewell working group	Meet to discuss delivery of future vision plans and next actions in business plan.	
	220/24	Clerk	Add reviewed policies to website - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Dignity at Work, Councillor/Officer Protocol, H&S Policy.	Complete
	221/24i	Clerk	Update website to show conclusion of accessible toilet provision survey.	Complete
	221/24ii	Deputy Clerk	Arrange new signs on King St toilets to show accessible toilet available at Bridewell during opening hours.	Enquiries in progress
	221/24iii	Clerk	Research alternative options for accessible toilet provision eg hiring.	
	222/24	Clerk/CllrAMc	Send letter to Cllr Glen re RAF Odiham/B3349 junction.	Complete
	223/24ii	Office	Award contract to Keith Dodd landscapes for tidying up the stocks area.	Complete
			Complete works.	
	223/24iii	Office	Arrange PAT testing of stocks.	Enquiries in progress
		Office	Arrange printing and replacement of map board outside All Saints.	Enquiries in progress
	224/24	Clerk	Notify InOdiham of decision to honour full grant.	Complete
	224/25ii	Clerk	Implement changes to earmarked reserve budgets on Scribe.	Complete
	224/25iv	Clerk	Close 2 Lloyds accounts.	Complete
	224/25v	Clerk	Refer decision on future of Lloyds bank account for the Odiham Sports Centre Trust to AGM.	
	226/24	C/DC/CllrLC/CllrPV	Set up payments on Unity Trust and login to approve payments.	Complete
	227/24	Clerk	Make revisions to 25/26 budget following review of returned grounds maintenane contract and refer final budget to Council.	On agenda
	228/24	Clerk	Change draft P&D minutes 11.12.24 on website to final.	Complete
	231/24	Clerk	Notify McCarthy Holden that OPC agrees to extending the notice period and confirm this is for both parties.	Complete
	232/24	Clerk	Respond to allotment tenant with decision re plot tenancy.	Complete
	233/24i	Clerk/CllrPV	Notify Hart of OPC's decision to accept the NP Examiner's report and changes therein.	Complete
	233/24ii	Clerk/CllrPV	Arrange for Troy Planning to update NP maps.	Complete
	233/24iii	Clerk	Publish NP Examiner's report on webiste.	Complete

REVIEW OF OPC POLICIES - 17.12.24

Policy Name	Latest review	Essential/ Desirable/ Optional	Recommended next review
Governance			
Code of Conduct	Sep-23	Essential	Sep-26 - review at least every 3 years or following change in legislation or guidance.
Publication Scheme	Sep-23	Essential	Sep-26 - unless change in ICO model scheme.
Standing Orders	Feb-24	Essential	Feb-25 - annual review required.
Scheme of Delegation	Jan-22	Desirable	Jan-25 - unless change in circumstances. On agenda.
Business Continuity Plan	Feb-23	Desirable	Feb-25 - unless change in circumstances. On agenda.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Dec-24	Advisable	Dec-26.
Dignity at Work Policy	Dec-24	Advisable	Dec-26.
Councillor Officer Protocol	Dec-24	Advisable	Dec-26.
Finance			
Financial Regulations	Nov-24	Essential	Nov-25
Statement of Internal Controls	Nov-24	Desirable	Nov-25
Claiming expenses by Cllrs Policy	Nov-24	Optional	Jul-27 - new Council.
Report on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Hart Parish Councils			-
Investment Policy	Nov-24	Essential	Nov-25
Reserves Policy	Nov-24	Optional	Nov-25
Grant Giving Policy	May-24	Essential	May-25.
Council Strategy			
Strategic Plan/Business Plan	Mar-24	Desirable	Mar-25 - annual review required.
Annual Action Plan	Aug-24	Desirable	Mar-25 - ongoing review and annual reporting required.
Casual Vacancy and Co-option Policy	Sep-24	Optional	May-27.
Complaints Procedure	Feb-24	Essential	May-27. Note NALC award panel's view that current procedure is "lightweight".
Data Protection			
Data Protection Policy	Jul-23	Essential	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Document Retention Policy	Aug-24	Desirable	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Consent form for communication with OPC	Jul-23	Desirable	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Privacy Notice - General	Jul-23	Essential	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Privacy Notice - Staff, Cllrs and Role Holders	Jul-23	Essential	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Subject Access Request Policy	Jul-23	Desirable	May-2027 - unless change in legislation.
Cyber Security Policy	Jun-24	Desirable	Jun-26.
Health & Safety			
Health & Safety Policy	Dec-24	Essential	Dec-25.
Safeguarding Policy	Dec-23	Desirable	Dec-25.
Environment			
Environment & Climate Change Policy	Sep-24	Desirable	Sep-26.
Biodiversity Action Plan	Aug-22	Essential	Reviewed Sept 23. Essential under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
Managing assets			
Memorial Bench Policy	Feb-23	Optional	Feb-25.
Hiring OPC's land and equipment	Sep-24	Optional	Sep-26.
Tree Policy	May-19	Optional	Overdue. Consider an enhanced policy for consideration as a Supplementary Planning Document.
Communication			
Communication Strategy	Mar-24	Desirable	Mar 25 - annual review required.
Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy	Apr-24	Desirable	Apr 27.
Staffing			
Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements	Dec-23	Desirable	Dec 25.
Training and Development Policy	Dec-23	Desirable	Dec 25.
Staff Handbook	Oct-24	Optional	Oct 25.
Sickness absence policy	Oct-23	Desirable	Oct 25.
Flexible working policy	Oct-23	Desirable	Oct 25.
Emergency dependants leave policy	Oct-23	Desirable	Oct 25.
Lone working policy	Oct-23	Desirable	Oct 25.
Pensions Discretionary Policy	Oct-24	Essential	Oct 25.



SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Adopted on ~~17.11.2018~~18.01.22

Reviewed on ~~18.01.22~~21.01.25

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Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation sets out the powers available to a Parish Council to delegate powers and the way in which OPC will utilise these powers in accordance with the law. This Scheme is not comprehensive as it is also subject to OPC's Standing Orders, ~~and~~ Financial Regulations ~~s and Statement of Internal Controls.s~~.

The power to delegate functions is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s101. The Parish Clerk is defined as the Proper Officer who will carry out functions provided by the Local Government act 1972 and the Responsible Finance Officer in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

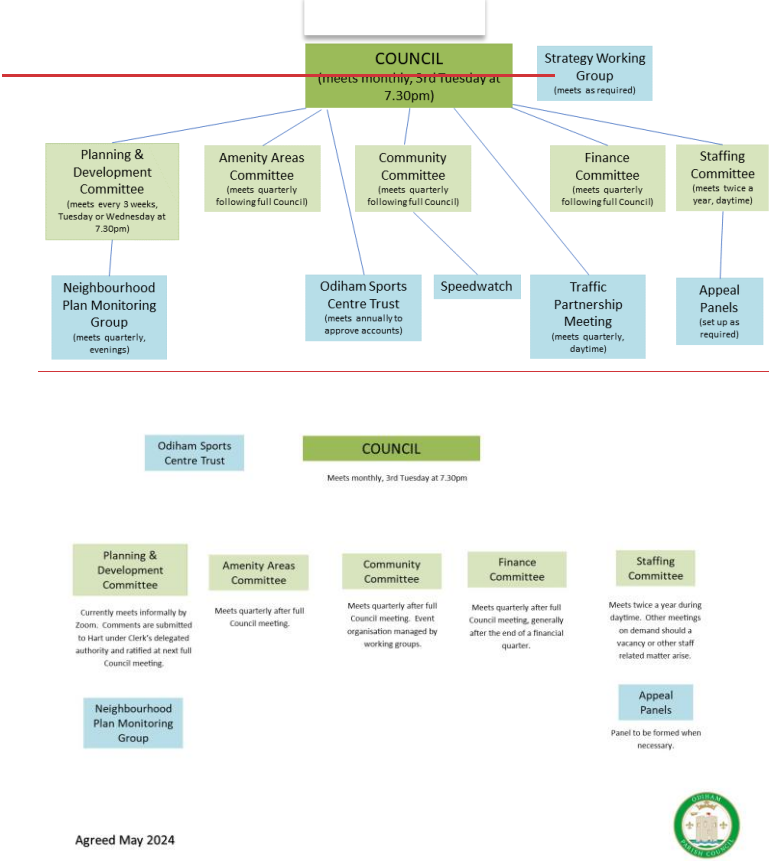
The intention of the delegation scheme is to allow OPC to act with all reasonable speed and take decisions at the most suitable level.

Therefore, the Parish Clerk is given powers over the day to day administration of the Council and Committees will determine matters within their terms of reference.

Any decisions taken under this Scheme of Delegation will, where possible, be taken in consultation with the relevant Council or Committee Chair and reported to the next available Council or Committee meeting.

OPC's Committee Structure ~~(agreed 18.01.22)~~

Odiham Parish Council Committee Structure



Delegated Powers and Responsibilities to the Parish Clerk

In addition to the responsibilities set out in the Clerk's job description, the Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- Day to day administration of services, together with routine inspections and control.
- Overall responsibility for staff.
- Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence requiring or requesting information relating to previous decisions of the Council, but not requiring an opinion to be taken by the Council or its Committees.

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- Authorisation of routine budget expenditure in accordance with the Financial Regulations and to manage timely transfer of funds between the Council's bank accounts to maintain adequate cash flow.
- Handling of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulations, in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Updating and managing the content of the Council's website and Facebook account.
- Co-ordinating the content and publishing the Council's newsletters and press statements, in consultation with the relevant Chairs.
- Disposal of Council records according to legal restrictions and the Council's Document Retention Policy.
- Preparation and submission of comments to consultations or correspondence where the Council's policy stance is known.
- Preparation and submission of comments to Planning Applications where a deadline falls before the next available Planning & Development Committee and in consultation with the Committee Chair.
- Authority to liaise with 3rd parties and invite representatives to Council or Committee meetings which are of interest to agreed Council policies, services or projects.
- Take appropriate actions arising from emergencies as required to respond to provide business continuity and respond to urgent H&S matters, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council or relevant Committee.
- In accordance with OPC's policy on Hiring OPC's Land and Equipment, Authorisation authority to allow community organisations use of OPC's assets or facilities for activities which support the Parish, OPC's activities and services.
- Authority to take immediate action on any incident which poses an immediate health & safety risk or damage to any council personnel or asset.
- Authority to deal with any Council matter during national crisis or emergency which prevents OPC from holding lawful Council meetings. Any decision will be taken in consultation with at least two Councillors, normally the Chair of the Council and the relevant Committee Chair. This authority does not extend to matters which must lawfully be decided by full Council.

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Standing Orders

Amended and Adopted ~~20th February 2024~~ 21st January 2025

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Edit History:

Rev. No	Date	Revision details	Minute Ref
1	07.07.14	Adopted	
2	03.11.14	Amended and adopted	
3	13.04.15	Amended and adopted	
4	18.05.15	Reviewed	
5	09.05.16	Reviewed	
6	03.10.16	Amended and adopted	
7	09.01.17	Updated	
8	08.05.17	Amended and adopted	
9	14.05.18	Amended and adopted	
10	13.05.19	Amended and adopted	
11	14.01.20	Amended and adopted	
12	16.02.21	Reviewed and adopted	
13	15.02.22	Reviewed and adopted	
14	21.02.23	Reviewed and adopted	
15	20.02.24	Reviewed and adopted	
16	21.01.25	Reviewed and adopted	

CONTENTS

1. Meetings.....	4
<u>2. Committees and sub-committees</u>	<u>8</u>
3. Extraordinary meetings of the council, committees and sub-committees.....	9
4. Rules of debate at meetings.....	10 ¹⁰⁹
4. Disorderly conduct at meetings	10
5. Previous resolutions.....	11
6. Voting on appointments	12 ¹²¹¹
7. Motions requiring written notice.....	12
8. Motions not requiring written notice	13 ¹⁴²
9. Management of Information	13
10. Draft minutes	14 ¹⁴³
11. Code of conduct and dispensations.....	14
12. Code of conduct complaints	15
13. Proper Officer	15
14. Responsible Financial Officer.....	17 ¹⁷¹⁶
15. Accounts and accounting statements	17
16. Financial controls and procurement.....	17
17. Handling staff matters	19
18. Responsibilities to provide information	19
19. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation	19
20. Relations with the Press/Media	20
21. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds	19
22. Communication with District Councillors.....	20
23. Restrictions on Councillor activities	20
24. Standing orders generally	20

1. Meetings

Mandatory for full Council meetings



Mandatory for committee meetings








Mandatory for sub-committee meetings



Note

- a) *Different symbol shapes are used to facilitate printing on black and white printers.*
- b) *Mandatory items are in bold.*
- c) *Changes to model Standing Orders relevant only to Odiham Parish Council are in italics*

-  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' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the 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 day's public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
-  d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
-  e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda or another topic at the discretion of the Chairman.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with Standing Order 1 (e) shall not exceed *10 minutes* unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to Standing Order 1 (f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than *3 minutes unless directed by the Chairman.*
- h In accordance with Standing Order 1(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that

meeting.

- j A person shall raise his or her hand when requesting to speak and, *if required by the Chairman*, stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
- k Any person speaking at a meeting shall address his comments to the Chairman.
- l Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak the Chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

- m **Subject to Standing Order 1 (n) 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 to 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.**

Persons reporting at a meeting are kindly requested to give notice that they are doing so before they begin.

- n **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**

- o **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.**

- p **The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

- q **The Chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his or her casting vote whether or not he or she gave an original vote.** (See also standing orders 2 (h) and (i) below.)

- r **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors or Non-Councillors with voting rights present and voting.**

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

- 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 present and 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.
- viii. *actions to be taken and by whom.*

● u **A Councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable, pecuniary**
 ■ **interest or another interest as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct in a matter being**
 ▲ **considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on**
his or her 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 (*4 Councillors for OPC*) and in no case shall the**
 ▲ **quorum of a meeting be less than 3 (*committees*).**

● 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 or a series of meetings on a single occasion shall not *normally* exceed a period of 2
hours.

y *The Chairman of the meeting may allow experts in a specific field to address the meeting to offer
 advice or clarity on agenda items.*

● z *Documents for all public meetings will be added to the website on the Friday prior to the meeting.*
 ■ *Any member of the public requiring a paper copy of the pack must request this to the parish office as*
 ▲ *they will not be available at the meeting.*

Annual 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 new 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 a day in May as the Council may direct.
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 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
directs.
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the**
election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he or she has resigned or becomes**
disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his or
her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, unless he or she resigns or becomes**

- disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he or she shall preside at the meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
 - i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he or she shall preside at the meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He or she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
 - j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council, the order of business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman and Councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of his or her acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. *Receive and note* the minutes of the last meeting of the Council and to receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees;
 - iii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - iv. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - v. *If applicable*, 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;
 - k **NOTE: A Councillor does not have to be present to be appointed as Chairman, to a Committee or as Chair of a Committee. They will need to be nominated and seconded by Councillors present at the meeting.**
 - l The following need to be in the annual cycle of business
 - i. Review and adoption of appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
 - ii. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses;
 - iii. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - iv. Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all *insurable* risks;
 - v. Review of the Council's and/or employees' subscriptions to other bodies;
 - vi. Setting the dates, time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of full Council.
 - vii. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government

- Act 1972 or the general power of competence;
- viii. Review of the Statement of Internal Controls, Investment Policy and Reserves Policy
 - ~~ix.~~ ix. [Review of Health and Safety Policy](#)
 - ~~x.~~ x. [Review of contracts](#)
 - ~~xi.~~ xi. [Review of Staff Handbook](#)
 - ~~ix-xii.~~ ix-xii. [Review of OPC's Business Plan and Annual Action Plan](#)
- m The following need to be reviewed at least every ~~two~~three years or following a change in legislation or sector advice:
- i. Councillor Code of Conduct
 - ii. Publication Scheme
 - iii. Scheme of Delegation
 - ~~iv.~~ iv. [Business Continuity Plan](#)
 - ~~v.~~ v. [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
 - ~~vi.~~ vi. [Dignity at Work Policy](#)
 - ~~iv-vii.~~ iv-vii. [Councillor Officer Protocol](#)
 - ~~v-viii.~~ v-viii. [Claiming expenses by councillors](#)
 - ~~vi-ix.~~ vi-ix. [Grant Giving Policy](#)
 - ~~vii-x.~~ vii-x. [Casual Vacancy and Co-option Policy](#)
 - ~~xi.~~ xi. [Complaints Policy](#)
 - ~~viii-xii.~~ viii-xii. [Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation \(see also Standing Order 11,20 and 21\);](#)
 - ~~ix-xiii.~~ ix-xiii. [Safeguarding Policy](#)
 - ~~x-xiv.~~ x-xiv. [Environment and Climate Change Policy](#)
 - ~~xi-xv.~~ xi-xv. [Policies relating to the management of the Council's amenities](#)
 - ~~xii-xvi.~~ xii-xvi. [Review of the Council's Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy;](#)
 - ~~xiii-xvii.~~ xiii-xvii. [Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;](#)

2. Committees and sub-committees

- a. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee or working group 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. *All committees and sub-committees of the Council act with the full power and authority of the Council in lawfully discharging functions that fall within their respective terms of*

reference, agreed budgets and current Council policies.

- e. The Council may appoint standing committees and other committees or working groups as may be necessary and:
- i. shall approve their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall approve the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the full Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee to determine the number and times of its meetings;
 - iv. shall subject to standing order 3 (b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may subject to standing order 3 (b) and (c) above appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the proper officer 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;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and sub-committee which shall be no less than 3;
 - ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance notice requirement, if any, required for the meeting of a sub-committee;
 - x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee or sub-committee that they are permitted to attend;
 - xi. may dissolve a committee or sub-committee.

3. Extraordinary meetings of the council, committees and sub-committees

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

within 5 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee or sub-committee, any 2 members of the committee or sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee (or a sub-committee).

4. Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear on the agenda unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g A Councillor may move an amendment to his or her own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- h If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- i Subject to Standing Order 5 (k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- j One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- k A Councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- l The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of the debate on it.
- m 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.
- n Unless permitted by the Chairman of the meeting, a Councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another Councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he or she last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation;
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.

- o During the debate of a motion, a Councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the Councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A Councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order which he considers has been breached or specify the irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting that they are concerned by.
- p A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman and his or her decision shall be final.
- q 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;
 - ix. to suspend particular Standing Order(s), except those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- r Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his or her right of reply.
- s Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 5 (r) above, the contribution or speeches by a Councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 *minutes* without the consent of the Chairman of the meeting.

5. Disorderly conduct at meetings

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this Standing Order is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If the person(s) disregard the request of the Chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any Councillor or the Chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made in accordance with Standing Order 6(b) above is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

6. Previous resolutions

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within 6 months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by a least 2 *Councillors* to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with Standing Order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the

recommendation of a committee or sub-committee.

- b When a motion moved pursuant to Standing Order 7 (a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further 6 months.

7. Voting on appointments

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be removed from 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 voting may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chairman of the meeting. Voting on appointment may be conducted by secret ballot if requested by any Councillor.

8. Motions requiring prior 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 notice to the Council's Proper Officer at least *5 clear days* before the next meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c A motion can be proposed by any Councillor or Non-councillor with voting rights. If two or more Councillors have submitted a proper motion it must be included in the agenda.
- d If the Proper Officer considers a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, they will contact the mover to discuss a re-submission so that the motion can be understood.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper in that it falls outside the statutory functions, powers and obligations of the Council, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Chairman with advice from the Proper Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman as to whether or not to include the motion in the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

9. Motions not requiring prior notice

The following motions may be moved at a meeting without prior 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 member to a committee, sub-committee or working group;
- 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.

10. Management of Information

- 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.**

11. Draft minutes

- a Draft minutes of a meeting would normally be circulated to Councillors normally within five working days of the meeting. 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 of the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the minutes shall be moved in accordance with Standing Order 10 (a) (i) above.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the Chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he or she shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:
"The Chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."
- e Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with Standing Order 12(f) 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.

12. Code of conduct and dispensations

See also Standing Order 1 (u).

- a All Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless he or she has been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he or she has a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which the Councillor had the interest.
- c Unless he or she has been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he or she 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 the Councillor had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer and the Chairman of the Council or Committee** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer or 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;
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with Standing Order 13 (e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following applies:**
- 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; or**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interest of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

13. Code of conduct complaints

- a Upon notification by the District Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to Standing Order 11 above, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in Standing Order 14 (a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of the Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed to what action, if any, to take in accordance with Standing Order 14 (d) below
- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- d **Upon notification by the District Council that a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Council shall consider any recommendations from the Monitoring Officer.**

14. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the Clerk or (ii) other staff members(s) nominated by

the Council to undertake the role of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall;

- i. **At least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on Councillors by delivery of 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 the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them).**

See Standing Order 1(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of the full Council and Standing Order 1 (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 unless a Councillor has given prior notice at least 3 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii **Convene a meeting of full Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv **Facilitate inspection of the minutes 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 the 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, as the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- x Receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi Assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirement 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 the Council's Financial Regulations;
- xiv Record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority electronically;
- xv Refer a planning application received by the Council to all members of the

- planning committee within 2 working days of receipt;
- xvi Manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme.

15. Responsible Financial Officer

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

16. 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 summarising:
 - 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 a quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlight any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end 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 full Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) for a 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 Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

17. 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 accounting records and systems of internal control;
 - 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 for payments;
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below ~~£25,000~~£30,000 due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise;
- b Financial Regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of ~~£25,000~~£30,000 but not less than the relevant thresholds in Standing Order 17 (f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity.**
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one Councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £214,904 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £5,372,609 for a public works contract (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in the Official Journal**

of the European Union (OJEU)) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website and in OJEU.

- g A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £ 426,955 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £ 5,336,937 for a works contract; (or other thresholds determined by the European Commission every two years and published in OJEU) shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.

18. Handling staff matters

- a *The handling of staff matters relating to the Parish Clerk is delegated by Council to the Staffing Committee to be managed according to the terms of reference agreed by Council.*
- b *The handling of staff matters for all other staff is delegated by the Council to the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Staffing Committee to be managed according to the terms of reference agreed by Council.*
- c *The management of grievances or disciplinary matters shall be according to the current policies on these matters approved by Council.*

19. 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** will publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

20. Responsibilities under Data Protection

Legislation

- a The Proper Officer acts as the Data Compliance Officer for the purposes of administering the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- b The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.
- c The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.

- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

21. Relations with the press/media

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

22. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless the same has been authorised by a resolution.
- b **In accordance with a resolution made under standing order 23 (a) any 2 Councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer or legal practitioner shall witness their signatures. The Proper Officer may also sign, on behalf of the Council, where the Council has made a resolution to this effect.**

23. Communication with District Councillors

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

24. Restrictions on Councillor activities

Unless authorised by a resolution, 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.

25. Standing Orders generally

- a All or part of a Standing Order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements **(in bold)** may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to permanently add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's Standing Orders not mandatory by law shall not be carried unless two-thirds of the Councillors at a

meeting of the Council vote in favour of the same.

- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to a Councillor as soon as possible.
- d The Chairman's decision as to the application of Standing Orders at meetings shall be final.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/~~2024~~2025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
Finance	Effective and secure Banking	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Regulations. Internal Controls. Reserves Policy. Investment Policy. Finance Committee. Scheme of Delegation. Online banking with 2 administrators. Dual signatories for banking transactions. Online banking with 2 Councillors appointed to complete the payment process. Insurance cover for loss of money “in transit”, in the private residence of employee, in OPC’s premises. Internal Audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFO monthly reconciliation of banks which are counter signed by the Finance Chair on a quarterly basis. Quarterly review of all banks and investments by Finance Committee. A monthly payment listing is presented to full Council with 2 Councillors appointed to approve. Annual review of Financial Regulations or following NALC updates or changes in legislation. Regular review of Internal Controls, Investment Strategy and Reserves Policy. Bank signatories minuted by full Council annually. The Clerk has authority to move funds between OPC’s accounts to ensure adequate cash flow.
	Effective and secure Investments	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Strategy. Finance Committee. Internal Audit. Scheme of Delegation. Multiple bank accounts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly review of investments by Finance Committee. All investments made in accordance with Investment Strategy deposited across multiple accounts to minimise risk. All accounts reconciled and reviewed by RFO on a monthly basis. Keep each investment fund/account below the FSCS limit where possible. Follow Internal Auditor’s advice. The Clerk has authority to move funds between OPC’s accounts to ensure adequate cash flow.
	Loss of income or need to provide essential services upon critical damage, loss or non-performance of third party.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme of Delegation. Reserves Policy. All contractors involved with contracts in excess of £500 to provide proof of public liability cover. Annual lease for Chapel Cottage. Waiting list held for allotments. 3 year business plan for Bridewell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General reserves held equating to 3-6 months running costs – with quarterly reviews. Insurance policy reviewed annually. Staff to source evidence of insurance and risk assessments for all contracts in excess of £500. Regular reviews of services and contracts by staff and committees. Council focus on generating income for The Bridewell. Provide sufficient budgets for cemetery maintenance.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/~~2024~~2025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk/RFO, working group, Finance Committee and Amenities Committee to keep Bridewell income under regular review.
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cash handling policy. 	
	Failure to comply with HMRC regulations	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAT returns submitted through Tax Digital. Scribe HMRC PAYE payroll system. HMRC helpline for advice. Internal Audit. External Audit. RFO Staff training where required. Professional advice line through SLCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use HMRC helpline when necessary or ask accountant for advice. Registered for Tax Digital and submit quarterly VAT returns through the finance package. Payroll is calculated and submitted on HMRC Payroll. VAT returns are reconciled with all bank accounts and reported to Finance Committee quarterly and full Council annually. Seek professional advice for new projects and services.
	Failure to keep track of spending	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scribe. RFO. Finance Committee. Financial Regulations for procurement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invoices entered into Scribe and reconciled with bank statements monthly. Monthly budget position reports reviewed by RFO. Quarterly budget position reports reviewed by Finance Committee. Half year position reviewed by Finance Committee and end of year position forecasted. Staffing Committee to regularly review staffing budgets. Finance Chair, Internal Auditor and Deputy Clerk have viewing rights to Scribe.
	Adequate budgeting and annual precept to cover the Council's operations	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Workshop for all Councillors and Staff. Strategic Business Plan. <u>Annual Action Plan.</u> Asset Register. Finance Committee. Internal Audit. Service contracts. Independent play area inspections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full review of half year position by Finance Committee. Draft budgets to be prepared in accordance with the financial regulations and reviewed at budget workshop and Finance Committee prior to the full Council meeting in January. Budget and proposed precept to be approved together at the January Council meeting. Quarterly reviews of expenditure against budgets. Regular inspection of assets and liaison with contractors.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/~~2024~~2025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of OPC's subscriptions and contracts. • 2 reviews of Strategic Plan per year including a review prior to the budget setting process. • Ensure method of keeping up-to-date with changes in sector legislation and costs in services. • Annual review of OPC's charging policy. • Earmarked Reserves listing recorded on Scribe. • Training and CPD for staff and Councillors to understand required expenditure arising from changes in legislation and OPC's liabilities.
	Compliance with borrowing restrictions	Low	No borrowing at present.	
Security	Buildings	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings insurance. • Asset register. • Buildings security considered as a high priority. • Manage number of key holders. • Risk assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of insurance. • Annual review of asset register. • Minimise key holders (check limits with insurer – 20 maximum, Police approved key safe acceptable). • Record when keys are borrowed & returned. • Open premises for contractors wherever possible rather than giving the key directly. • Clerk to notify insurer of every asset addition and deletion at time of acquisition or disposal. • Professional fire risk assessment for Bridewell. • Council to consider self insurance for properties.
	Theft	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contents insurance cover for Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of insurance. • Annual review of risk assessment. • Secure premises as a high priority, eg repair broken locks immediately. • Internal offices and cabinets locked. • Minimal equipment stored in Parish office. • No cash stored in office.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/20242025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
Assets	Protection of physical assets	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets Register. Insurance cover for buildings and play equipment. Land registered with Land Registry. Inspection regimes. Amenities Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of insurance. Annual review of asset register. New items added to asset register and insurance policy in a timely manner. Regular inspections of assets by staff and service contractors. Parish Office available to take public reports. Concerns reported to Amenities Committee on a quarterly basis.
	Maintenance of buildings	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings maintenance programme. Regular inspections. Adequate budget provision and earmarked reserves. Amenities Committee. Strategic Plan. Professional advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual inspections by Amenities Officer. Amenity Areas Committee reviews inspection programme at 6 monthly intervals. Amenity Areas Committee consider rolling R&M programme and input to the Strategic Plan. Seek professional advice and reports where required.
	Maintenance of play areas	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with RoSPA guidelines. Regular inspections. Amenities Committee. Adequate budget provision and earmarked reserves. Strategic Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All play areas are inspected weekly by grounds contractor, additional 2 weekly check by Amenities Officer plus full annual independent inspection. Annual review of inspection records by Amenity Committee. Significant R&M reported to Amenities Committee quarterly. Respond to medium and high risk issues as identified. Ensure adequate budget provision when setting budget. Build earmarked reserve for low priority issues and complete replacements in accordance with anticipated life of equipment.
Legal	Public Liability	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance cover for public liability and Hirers Liability. H&S Policy. Proper R&M of OPC's assets. All H&S matters considered as a high priority. Clerk acts as Responsible H&S Officer. H&S training for staff and Councillors. Risk Assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of insurance by full Council. Annual review of H&S policy or following change in legislation or circumstances. Risk assessments carried out and reviewed when required. Annual check of 3rd party insurance hirers by Staff. Ensure all contractors have adequate insurance. Staff to obtain risk assessments and insurance for contracts

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/20242025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Inspection Policy. • Bridewell hiring conditions. • Policy on hiring OPC's land and equipment. • Memorial Testing Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over £500 and method statements for large projects. • Regular liaison with Bridewell hirers and tenants. • High risk H&S matters to be reported to full Council and actioned asap. • Training schedule regularly reviewed by Clerk and Staffing Committee. • Compulsory H&S training for key roles. • Annual review of H&S Policy or following significant change in legislation or circumstances.
	Employer Liability	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Committee. • Qualified Clerk. • Compliance with employment law. • Compliance with H&S at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 + other specific, relevant H&S legislation. • Compliance with Equality Act 2010. • Essential Employment Law training for Staffing Committee, Clerk and any other member of staff with line management responsibilities. • Health & Safety Policy. • HALC HR support. • Employers Liability Insurance. • Legal insurance cover. • Fidelity guarantee insurance cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of staff structure. • At least 2 Staffing Committee meetings per year. • Monthly support meetings to Clerk. • Seek professional advice wherever possible. • Urgent employment law matters to be reported to Staffing Committee or full Council (whichever is most suitable and minimising any disclosure of personal data). • High risk H&S matters to be reported to Staffing Committee or full Council (whichever is most suitable & minimising any disclosure of personal data). • Training schedule regularly reviewed by Clerk and Staffing Committee. • Annual review of insurance. • Annual review of H&S Policy or following significant change in legislation or circumstances.
	Acting lawfully	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Clerk with membership of SLCC. • Training and CPD for Staff and Councillors. • Compliance with key sector legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003 and Misc Provision 1974. • Local Government Finance Act 1988. • Localism Act 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of Standing Orders. • Annual review of Financial Regulations. • Ensure all Councillors have completed DPI forms and review annually. • Regular review of Code of Conduct including review against national model and local district. • The appointment of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/20242025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 & Smaller Authorities Regulations 2015. Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. GDPR 2018. Equality Act 2010. Sound and reliable sources of advice – eg HALC, NALC & SLCC. Legal expenses insurance cover. Fidelity guarantee insurance cover. Libel & slander insurance cover. Scheme of Delegation. Internal Auditor. Monitoring Officer. Membership of HALC and NALC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training schedule regularly reviewed by Clerk and Staffing Committee. CPD encouraged and supported. Clerk to advise Council on acting within legal powers and complying with relevant legislation. Clerk (or committee with delegated authority) to obtain advice where required. Clear policies on how OPC will comply with legislation. Council decisions to be clearly minuted including decision, value and power to act (should OPC lose the General Power of Competence). Promote transparency by publishing as much Council business as possible on OPC's website. Membership of ICO. Interim and annual auditor by Internal Auditor. Report corporate breaches to Monitoring Officer.
	Loss of key staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Continuity Plan. Staffing Committee and clear staffing policies. Staff contracts. Annual appraisals. Regular 1-2-1 meetings for all staff. Appeals panel and related policies. Data Retention Policy. Second bank administrator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular support meetings to Clerk. Regular 1-2-1 meetings better Clerk (line manager) and other staff. Review of continuity plan. Succession planning. Appropriate notice periods in staff contracts. Comprehensive records and reports. Ensure staff annual leave does not impact on business continuity. Proper handover and induction plans with staff changes. Staffing Committee and Appeals Panel to respond to matters arising in a timely manner and in accordance with policies.
IT & Council Records	Threat of IT failure and loss of IT records	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Retention Policy. Professional IT support. Secure areas on Council server, password protected. Daily IT back-ups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular review of IT security practices. Regular review of Data Retention Policy. Staff to ensure premises are secured. Staff to back-up important documents.

Odiham Parish Council – Annual Risk Assessment ~~2023~~2024/~~2024~~2025

AREA	RISK	LEVEL	CONTROL MEASURE	CONTROL METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-virus software. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily back-up of server files.
	Loss of paper records		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Retention Policy. • Building security. • External storage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular clean up in office. • Staff to ensure premises are secured - internal office doors and filing cabinets are locked. • Legal and burial papers are filed in fireproof cabinets wherever possible. • Some historic records are held offsite in the North Chapel or Hampshire Archives.
Business Continuity	Loss of key staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Plan. • Scheme of Delegation. • Insurance. • Membership of HALC. • Staffing Committee. • Second key holders and banking admins. • Record of critical passwords. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of Business Continuity Plan. • Regular review of Scheme of Delegation. • Regular dialogue between staff. • Regular training of staff. • Regular dialogue with Councillors. • Ensure record of passwords is kept up to date and in secure place.
	National crisis.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Plan. • Scheme of Delegation. • Adequate banking signatories and admins. • Record of critical passwords. • Website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of Scheme of Delegation. • Timely risk assessment of new threats, eg Covid. • Ensure adequate banking signatories and second banking administrator. • Ensure record of passwords is kept up to date and in secure place. • Keep website up-to-date with key policies and information.

Reviewed and approved at OPC meeting held on: ~~16th January 2024~~

Signed by the Chairman: *Ellen A McFarlane*

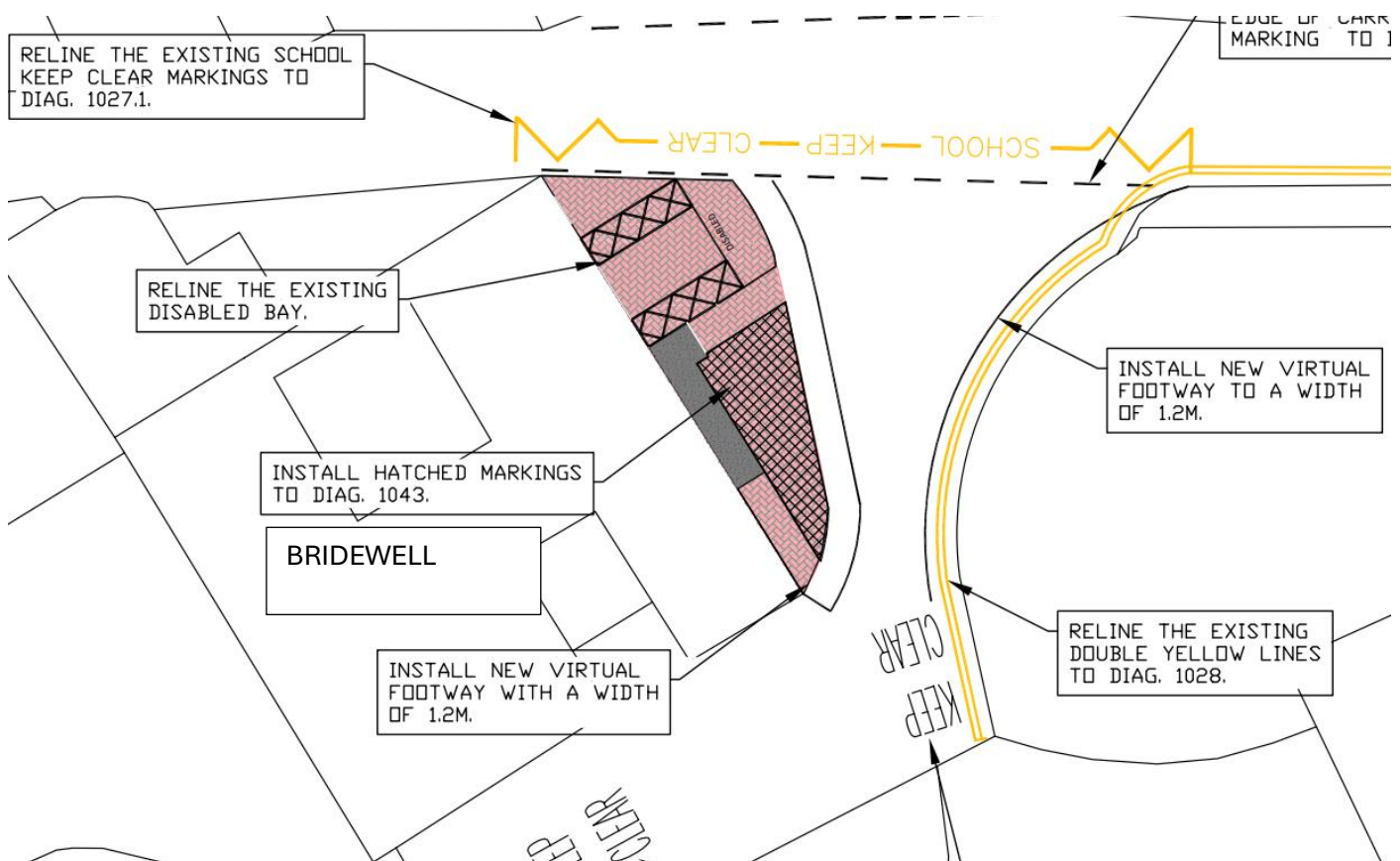


REPORT ON: Line markings outside The Bridewell
WRITTEN BY: Parish Clerk
MEETING DATE: 21st January 2025
AGENDA ITEM: 244/24

Background

When OPC took over The Bridewell in March 2023, OPC understood the land marked red below was highways land and the curtilage of the building stopped at the wall of The Bridewell.

OPC made several approaches to HCC asking for help in managing inconsiderate parking outside The Bridewell which includes blocking the entrance steps and ramp. The plan below shows the line markings implemented by HCC in 2024 in response to OPC's request.



These enquiries also asked whether OPC could take ownership or the land highlighted red and found that this would require a 2 part process; to extinguish Highway Rights then purchase:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/searchesrightscharges/highwayrights>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/propertyservices/contact>

The new line markings appear to have stopped parking across the steps but not the ramp and have unfortunately created new issues for Bridewell users.



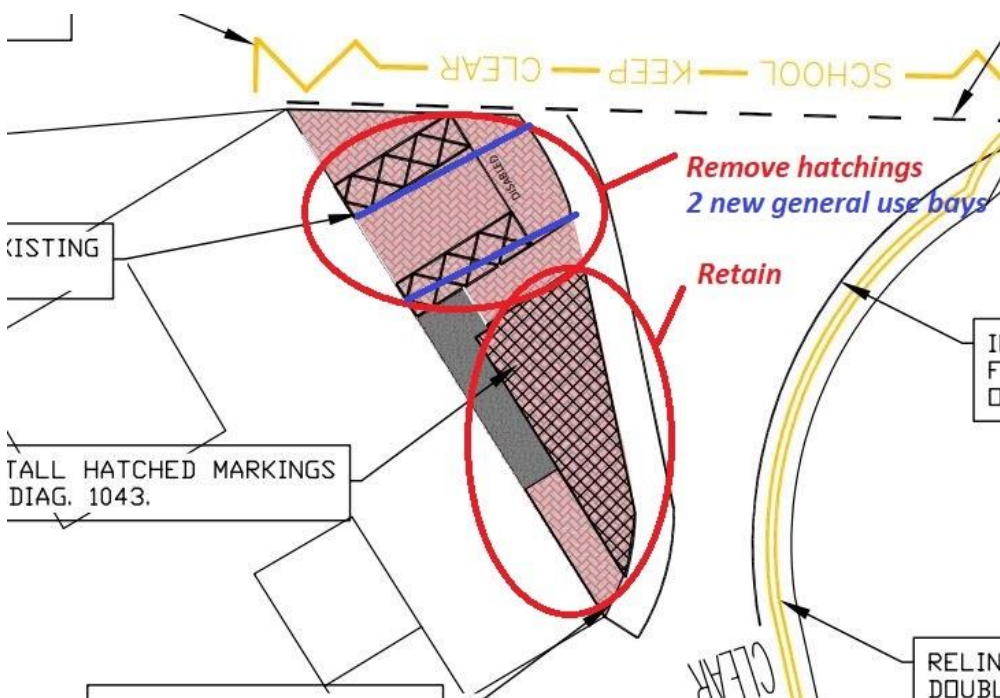
The original advisory disabled bay was painted by HCC several years ago to support users of The Bridewell but the new line markings imply it's a formal disabled space and cars are parked for several days (blue badge holders and otherwise) and the space is rarely available to support the Bridewell users who might need it.

Additionally, parking habits seem to have changed since the new markings were installed and the office has encountered several incidents of cars reversing abut to the OPC office windows and leaving engines running and filling the office with exhaust fumes. As a result, staff have returned to parking outside of the office to stop this happening. This is worse between 8.15-9am and 2.30-3.45pm.

Suggested way forward

A site meeting between a HCC traffic officer, Chair and Clerk before Christmas looked at the line markings outside of The Bridewell when reviewing all parking in The Bury area. As a result, HCC will be providing a proposed new parking bay layout in the Bury between All Saints and The Bell and this will be added to a future agenda.

At the meeting, OPC was asked to respond with their preference for line marking outside of The Bridewell. The plan below shows what was suggested during the site meeting:



For decision

- i) To consider whether Plan 2 shows OPC's preference for parking outside of The Bridewell, to support Bridewell users and to protect general wellbeing.
- ii) To gauge opinion on taking future ownership of the area marked in red, noting this would require further research and the potential timescale and cost.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Open consultation

Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England

Published 18 December 2024

Applies to England

Contents

1. Scope of this consultation
2. Ministerial foreword
3. Background: Standards and Conduct framework and sanctions arrangements
4. Who ~~we~~ we would like to hear from
5. Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework
6. Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards
7. Public Sector Equality Duty

Annex A: ~~Personal~~ data



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1. Scope of this consultation

Topic of this consultation

This consultation seeks views on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England, and measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England to ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

Scope of this consultation

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is consulting on introducing strengthened sanctions for local authority code of conduct breaches in England.

This includes all ‘relevant authorities’ as defined by Section 27(6) of the Localism Act 2011, which includes:

- a county council
- a unitary authority
- London borough councils
- a district council
- the Greater London Authority
- the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority or police authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- parish councils
- a fire and rescue authority in England constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies,
- a joint authority established by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985, an economic prosperity board established under section 88 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- a combined authority established under section 103 of that Act,
- a combined county authority established under section 9(1) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- the Broads Authority

- a National Park authority in England established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995

It does not cover:

- police and crime commissioners
- internal drainage boards
- any other local authority not otherwise defined as a ‘relevant authority’ above

All references to ‘members’ refer to elected members, mayors, co-opted and appointed members of each of the ‘relevant authorities’ defined above.

Geographical scope

The questions in this consultation paper apply to all relevant local authorities in England as defined above.

They generally do not apply to authorities in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, except in relation to Police and Crime Panels in Wales.

Impact assessment

We will produce a full Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) assessment, and all necessary impact assessments, as the policy proposals develop further following this consultation.

Basic information

This is an open consultation. We particularly seek the views of individual members of the public; prospective and current elected members/representatives; all relevant local authorities defined above; and those bodies that represent the interests of local authority members/representatives at all levels.

Body responsible for the consultation

The Local Government Capacity and Improvement Division of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for

conducting this consultation.

Duration

This consultation will last for 10 weeks from 18 December 2024.

Enquiries

For any enquiries about the consultation please contact:

LGstandardsreform@communities.gov.uk

How to respond

You can only respond to this call for evidence through our online consultation platform, [Citizen Space](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework) (<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework>).

2. Ministerial foreword

The government is determined to fix the foundations of local government so councils can sustainably provide decent public services and shape local places, and so elected representatives can be fully accountable to the public they serve. Doing so is critical to national renewal, our missions, and our plans to push power out of Westminster and into the hands of local people with skin in the game.

At the core of this agenda is a plan to make local government across England fit, legal, and decent – so that councils have the backing from central government to deliver the high standards and strong financial management that they strive for, without needless micromanagement of day-to-day local decision-making. This plan includes:

- fixing our broken audit system
- improving oversight and accountability
- giving councils genuine freedoms to work for, and deliver in the best interests of, their communities
- improving the standards and conduct regime

This consultation is focused on the proposed reforms to the standards and conduct regime that will contribute to making sure England is covered by effective local and strategic authorities that are well-governed, with high standards met and maintained.

It is an honour and a privilege to be elected as a member and with it comes an individual and collective responsibility to consistently demonstrate and promote the highest standards of conduct and public service.

Members take decisions affecting critical local services such as social care, education, housing, planning, licensing, and waste collection. With greater devolution, local authorities will increasingly be taking decisions to shape local transport, skills, employment support, and growth. Decisions that are the responsibility of members impact virtually every citizen's life at some level, and the electorate has a right to expect that it can trust its local elected members to uphold the highest ethical standards and act in the best interests of the communities they serve.

I strongly believe that the vast majority of local elected members maintain high standards of conduct and that they are driven by duty and service. I believe that people stand for elected office in their local communities with the best intentions to act in the interests of those communities, bringing an energy and commitment to working collaboratively, creatively, and respectfully.

Members, officers, reporters and members of public are entitled to support and participate in the local democratic process in the confidence that high standards are maintained. This government wants to celebrate the positive power of public service and, in doing so, we want to give individual authorities appropriate and proportionate means to deal with misconduct effectively and decisively when it does occur. We also want to ensure that anyone can rightly feel confident about raising an issue under the code of conduct whether it impacts them personally and/or is a code conduct breach that brings the reputation of the council into disrepute.

With approximately 120,000 councillors in England across all types and tiers of local government, we know there are rare instances of misconduct.

Robust political debate is part of our democratic system, but we know from local councils that there are examples of bullying, harassment or other misconduct, when from even a very small minority of members can have a seriously destabilising effect, potentially bringing a council into disrepute and distracting from the critical business of delivering for residents.

This government is committed to working with local and regional government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement. Our ambition is to create a rigorous standards and conduct framework that will actively contribute to ensuring that local government throughout the country is fit, legal, and decent. With this in mind, this consultation seeks your views on a range of proposals to give local leaders the tools they need to establish and maintain a strong and ethical public service and democratic culture, and the people they serve the confidence that local democracy works for them.

3. Background: Standards and Conduct framework and sanctions arrangements

The Localism Act 2011

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/1/chapter/7/enacted>)^[footnote 1] established the current standards and conduct framework for local authorities.

The current regime requires every local authority to adopt a code of conduct, the contents of which must as a minimum be consistent with the 7 ‘Nolan’ principles of standards in public life

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>) (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership), and set out rules on requiring members to register and disclose pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. Beyond these requirements, it is for individual councils to set their own local code. The Local Government Association (LGA) published an updated model code of conduct and guidance (<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020>) in 2021, which councils can choose whether to adopt or not.

Every authority must also have in place arrangements under which it can investigate allegations of breaches of its code of conduct and must consult at least one independent person before coming to decisions. These decisions are normally taken in one of two ways depending on an authority’s specific arrangements. The decision can be made by full council following advice from their standards committee (or equivalent).

Alternatively, the decision can be made by the standards committee if they have been given the power to do so. Although a standards committee may contain unelected independent members and co-opted members, only principal councils’ elected members may vote in a decision-making standards committee.

There is no provision in current legislation for a sanction to suspend a councillor found to have breached the code of conduct. Sanctions for member code of conduct breaches are currently limited to less robust measures than suspension, such as barring members from Cabinet, Committee, or representative roles, a requirement to issue an apology or undergo code of conduct training, or public criticism. Local authorities are also unable to withhold allowances from members who commit serious breaches of their code of conduct, and there is no explicit provision in

legislation for councils to impose premises bans or facilities withdrawals where they consider that it might be beneficial to do so.

The government considers that the current local authority standards and conduct regime is in certain key aspects ineffectual, inconsistently applied, and lacking in adequate powers to effectively sanction members found in serious breach of their codes of conduct.

4. Who we would like to hear from

Responses are invited from local authority elected members and officers from all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. We are also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

Please be assured that all responses to this consultation are anonymous, and no information will be disclosed in any future published response to the consultation, or reporting of the consultation results, that will compromise that anonymity.

Question 1

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as:

a) an elected member – if so please indicate which local authority type(s) you serve on

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

b) a council officer – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council

- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

c) a council body – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council ✓
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

d) a member of the public

e) a local government sector body – please state

5. Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework

a) Mandatory minimum prescribed code of conduct

The government proposes to legislate for the introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct which would seek to ensure a higher minimum standard of consistency in setting out the behaviours expected of elected members. The government will likely set out the mandatory code in regulations to allow flexibility to review and amend in future, this will also provide the opportunity for further consultation on the detail.

Codes of conduct play an important role in prescribing and maintaining high standards of public service, integrity, transparency, and accountability. At their best, they establish clear guidelines for behaviour and expectations that members always act ethically in the public's best interest. Currently,

there is significant variation between adopted codes, ranging from those who choose to adopt the LGA's full model code to those who simply conform with the minimum requirement of restating the Nolan principles.

A prescribed model code which covers important issues such as discrimination, bullying, and harassment, social media use, public conduct when claiming to represent the council, and use of authority resources could help to uphold consistently high standards of public service in councils across the country and convey the privileged position of public office. It could also provide clarity for the public on the consistent baseline of ethical behaviour they have a right to expect.

We would be interested in understanding whether councils consider there should be flexibility to add to the prescribed code to reflect individual authorities' circumstances. They would not be able to amend the mandatory provisions.

Question 2

Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?

- Yes ✓
- No
- If no, why not? [Free text box]

Question 3

If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?

- Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code ✓
- No – a prescribed code should be uniform across the country
- Unsure

Question 4

Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?

- Yes ✓ Type text here
- No
- Unsure

b) Standards Committees

Currently, there is no requirement for local authorities to constitute a formal standards committee. The only legal requirement is for local authorities to have in place 'arrangements' to investigate and make decisions on allegations of misconduct.

The government believes that all principal authorities should be required to convene a standards committee. Formal standards committees would support consistency in the handling of misconduct allegations, applying the same standards and procedures to all cases and providing a formal route to swiftly identify and address vexatious complainants. Furthermore, having a formal standards committee in place could support the development of expertise in handling allegations of misconduct, leading to more informed decision-making. Removing the scope for less formal and more ad hoc arrangements would also enhance transparency and demonstrate to the public that standards and conduct issues will always be dealt with in a structured and consistent way.

This section of the consultation seeks views on two specific proposals to enhance the fairness and objectivity of the standards committee process. Firstly, it considers whether standards committee membership would be required to include at least one Independent Person, as well as (where applicable^[footnote 2]) at least one co-opted member from a parish or town council. Secondly, it seeks views on whether standards committees should be chaired by the Independent Person.

Question 5

Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 6

Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 7

In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to

triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?

- Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees ✓
- No, local authorities should have discretion to allow decisions to be taken by full council
- Unsure

Type text here

Question 8

Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?

- Yes – this is important for ensuring objectivity ✓
- No – only elected members of the council in question should have voting rights
- Unsure

Question 9

Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Unsure

Question 10

If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.

[Free text box]

c) Publishing investigation outcomes

To enhance transparency, local authorities should, subject to data protection obligations, be required to publish a summary of code of conduct allegations, and any investigations and decisions. This will be accompanied with strong mechanisms to protect victims' identity to ensure complainants are not dissuaded from coming forward for fear of being identified,

There may be a range of views on this, as publishing the outcome of an investigation that proves there is no case to answer could still be considered damaging to the reputation of the individuals concerned, or it could be considered as helpful in exposing instances of petty and vexatious complaints.

Question 11

Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?

- Yes - the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes
- No - only cases in which a member is found guilty of wrongdoing should be published ✓
- Other views – text box

d) Requiring the completion of investigations if a member stands down

In circumstances where a member stands down during a live code of conduct investigation, councils should be required to conclude that investigation and publish the findings. The government is proposing this measure to ensure that, whilst the member in question will no longer be in office and therefore subject to any council sanction, for the purposes of accountability and transparency there will still be full record of any code of conduct breaches during their term of office.

Question 12

Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Unsure

e) Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward

The government appreciates that it can often be difficult for those who experience misconduct on the part of elected members, such as bullying and harassment, to feel that it is safe and worthwhile to come forward and raise their concerns. If individuals believe there is a likelihood that their complaint will not be addressed or handled appropriately, the risk is that victims will not feel empowered to come forward, meaning misconduct continues without action. We recognise that standing up to instances of misconduct takes an emotional toll, particularly in unacceptable situations where the complaints processes are protracted and do not result in meaningful action. We are committed to ensuring that those affected by misconduct are supported in the right way and feel empowered to come forward. This section seeks feedback from local authorities with experience of overseeing council complaints procedures, or sector bodies and individuals with views on how this might be carried out most effectively. We are also keen to hear from those who work, or have worked, in local government, and who have either witnessed, or been the victim of, member misconduct.

Question 13

If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?

[Number box]

Question 13a

For the above, where possible, please provide a breakdown for complaints made by officers, other elected members, the public, or any other source:

- Complaints made by officers [Number box]
- Complaints made by other elected members [Number box]
- Complaints made by the public [Number box]
- Complaints made by any other source [Number box]

Question 14

If you currently work, or have worked, within a local authority, have you ever been the victim of (or witnessed) an instance of misconduct by an elected member and felt that you could not come forward? Please give reasons if you feel comfortable doing so.

- Yes

- No
- [Free text box]

Question 15

If you are an elected member, have you ever been subject to a code of conduct complaint? If so, did you feel you received appropriate support to engage with the investigation?

- Yes
- No
- [Free text box]

Question 16

If you did come forward as a victim or witness, what support did you receive, and from whom? Is there additional support you would have liked to receive?

[Free text box]

Question 17

In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?

[Free text box]

6. Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

The government believes that local authorities should have the power to suspend councillors for serious code of conduct breaches for a maximum of 6 months, with the option to withhold allowances and institute premises and facilities bans where deemed appropriate. This section of the consultation explores these proposed provisions in greater detail.

While the law disqualifies certain people from being, or standing for election as, a councillor (e.g. on the grounds of bankruptcy, or receipt of a custodial sentence of 3 months or more, or it subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 - meaning on the sex offenders register) councillors cannot currently be suspended or disqualified for breaching their code of conduct.

Feedback from the local government sector in the years since the removal of the power to suspend councillors has indicated that the current lack of meaningful sanctions means local authorities have no effective way of dealing with more serious examples of member misconduct.

The most severe sanctions currently used, such as formally censuring members, removing them from committees or representative roles, and requiring them to undergo training, may prove ineffective in the cases of more serious and disruptive misconduct. This may particularly be the case when it comes to tackling repeat offenders.

The government recognises that it is only a small minority of members who behave badly, but the misconduct of this small minority can have a disproportionately negative impact on the smooth running of councils. We also appreciate the frustration members of the public and councillors can feel both in the inability to deal decisively with cases of misconduct, and the fact that offending members can continue to draw allowances.

Question 18

Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?

- Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members ✓
- No – authorities should not be given the power to suspend members
- Unsure

Question 19

Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?

- Yes - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee
- No - a decision to suspend should be referred to an independent body
- Unsure ✓
- [Free text box]

Question 20

Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?

- Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor's suspension ✓ type text here

- No – it should be for individual councils to determine their own arrangements for managing constituents' representation during a period of councillor suspension
- Unsure

a) The length of suspension

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended in their 2019 Local Government Ethical Standards^[footnote 3] (CSPL) report that the maximum length of suspension, without allowances, should be 6 months and the government agrees with this approach. The intent of this proposal would be that non-attendance at council meetings during a period of suspension would be disregarded for the purposes of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, which states that a councillor ceases to be a member of the local authority if they fail to attend council meetings for 6 consecutive months.

The government believes that suspension for the full 6 months should be reserved for only the most serious breaches of the code of conduct, and considers that there should be no minimum length of suspension to facilitate the proportionate application of this strengthened sanction.

Question 21

If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?

- Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months
- Yes – however the government should set a different maximum length (in months) [Number box]
- No – I do not think the government should set a maximum length of suspension ✓
- Unsure

Question 22

If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?

- Infrequently – likely to be applied only to the most egregious code of conduct breaches
- Frequently – likely to be applied in most cases, with some exceptions for less serious breaches

- Almost always – likely to be the default length of suspension for code of conduct breaches
- Unsure

b) Withholding allowances and premises and facilities bans

Giving councils the discretion to withhold allowances from members who have been suspended for serious code of conduct breaches in cases where they feel it is appropriate to do so could act as a further deterrent against unethical behaviour. Holding councillors financially accountable during suspensions also reflects a commitment to ethical governance, the highest standards of public service, and value for money for local residents.

Granting local authorities the power in legislation to ban suspended councillors from local authority premises and from using council equipment and facilities could be beneficial in cases of behavioural or financial misconduct, ensuring that suspended councillors do not misuse resources or continue egregious behaviour. Additionally, it would demonstrate that allegations of serious misconduct are handled appropriately, preserving trust in public service and responsible stewardship of public assets.

These measures may not always be appropriate and should not be tied to the sanction of suspension by default. The government also recognises that there may be instances in which one or both of these sanctions is appropriate but suspension is not. It is therefore proposed that both the power to withhold allowances and premises and facilities bans represent standalone sanctions in their own right.

Question 23

Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors ✓
- No – suspended councillors should continue to receive allowances
- Unsure

Question 24

Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to

withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues ✓
- No – suspended councillors should still be able to use council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Question 25

Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?

- Yes
- No ✓
- Unsure

c) Interim suspension

Some investigations into serious code of conduct breaches may be complex and take time to conclude, and there may be circumstances when the misconduct that has led to the allegation is subsequently referred to the police to investigate. In such cases, the government proposes that there should be an additional power to impose interim suspensions whilst and until a serious or complex case under investigation is resolved.

A member subject to an interim suspension would not be permitted to participate in any council business or meetings, with an option to include a premises and facilities ban.

We consider that members should continue to receive allowances whilst on interim suspension and until an investigation proves beyond doubt that a serious code of conduct breach has occurred or a criminal investigation concludes. The decision to impose an interim suspension would not represent a pre-judgement of the validity of an allegation.

We suggest that:

- Interim suspensions should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months. After the expiry of an initial interim suspension period, the relevant council's standards committee should review the case to decide whether it is in the public interest to extend.

- As appropriate, the period of time spent on interim suspension may be deducted from the period of suspension a standards committee imposes.

Question 26

Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?

- Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary ✓
- No, interim suspension would not be necessary
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 27

Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?

- Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are investigated is important ✓
- No - members whose investigations are ongoing should retain access to council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Question 28

Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 29

Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 30

If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards

to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?

- Yes – there should be safeguards ✓
- No – councils will know the details of individual cases and should be trusted to act responsibly

Question 30a

If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?

[Free text box] **Timescales for further review and resolution**

d) Disqualification for multiple breaches and gross misconduct

When councillors repeatedly breach codes of conduct, it undermines the integrity of the council and erodes public confidence. To curb the risk of repeat offending and continued misconduct once councillors return from a suspension, the government considers that it may be beneficial to introduce disqualification for a period of 5 years for those members for whom the sanction of suspension is invoked on more than one occasion within a 5-year period.

This measure underlines the government's view that the sanction of suspension should only be used in the most serious code of conduct breaches, because in effect a decision to suspend more than once in a 5-year period would be a decision to disqualify an elected member. However, we consider this measure would enable councils to signal in the strongest terms that repeated instances of misconduct will not be tolerated and would act as a strong deterrent against the worst kind of behaviours becoming embedded.

Currently a person is disqualified if they have been convicted of any offence and have received a sentence of imprisonment (suspended or not) for a period of 3 months or more (without the option of a fine) in the 5-year period before the relevant election. Disqualification also covers sexual offences, even if they do not result in a custodial or suspended sentence.

Question 31

Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?

- Yes – twice within a 5-year period should result in disqualification for 5 years
- Yes – but for a different length of time and/or within a different timeframe (in years) [Number boxes]⁴
- No - the power to suspend members whenever they breach codes of conduct is sufficient
- Any other comments [free text box]

Question 32

Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Unsure
- [Free text box]

e) Appeals

The government proposes that:

- A right of appeal be introduced for any member subject to a decision to suspend them.
- Members should only be able to appeal any given decision to suspend them once.
- An appeal should be invoked within 5 working days of the notification of suspension; and
- Following receipt of a request for appeal, arrangements should be made to conduct the appeal hearing within 28 working days.

The government believes that were the sanction of suspension to be introduced (and potentially disqualification if a decision to suspend occurs a second time within a 5-year period) it would be essential for such a punitive measure to be underpinned by a fair appeals process.

A right of appeal would allow members to challenge decisions that they believe are unjust or disproportionate and provides a safeguard to ensure that the sanction of suspension is applied fairly and consistently.

We consider that it would be appropriate to either create a national body, or to vest the appeals function in an existing appropriate national body, and views on the merits of that are sought at questions 38 and 39 below. Firstly, the following questions test opinion on the principle of providing a mechanism for appeal.

Question 33

Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?

- Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision ✓
- No – a council's decision following consideration of an investigation should be final
- Unsure

Question 34

Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?

- Yes – within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process ✓
- Yes – but within a different length of time (in days) [Number box]
- No – there should be no time limit for appealing a decision

The government is also keen to explore if a right of appeal should be provided, either in relation to whether a complaint proceeds to full investigation and consideration by the standards committee, or where a claimant is dissatisfied with the determination of the standards committee.

Question 35

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint?

- Yes ✓
- No
- Unsure

Question 36

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?

- Yes ✓
- No

- Unsure ~~type text here~~

Question 37

If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.

[Free text box] Referred to the authority's Standards Committee with different members on the Committee hearing the Appeal.

f) Potential for a national appeals body

There is a need to consider whether appeals panels should be in-house within local authorities, or whether it is right that this responsibility sits with an independent national body. Whereas an in-house appeals process would potentially enable quicker resolutions by virtue of a smaller caseload, empowering a national body to oversee appeals from suspended members and complainants could reinforce transparency and impartiality and help to ensure consistency of decision-making throughout England, setting precedents for the types of cases that are heard.

Question 38

Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?

- Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality ✓
- No – appeals cases should be heard by an internal panel
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 39

If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:

- Be limited to hearing elected member appeals ✓
- Be limited to hearing claimant appeals
- Both of the above should be in scope
- Please explain your answer [free text box]

7. Public Sector Equality Duty

Question 40

In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit individuals with protected characteristics
- it would disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics
- neither ✓

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

[Free text box]

Annex A: Personal data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are be entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018. Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk.

2. Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The Data Protection Act 2018 states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a consultation.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

We use a third-party platform, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance, your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based servers.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Your personal data will be held for 2 years from the closure of the consultation.

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a) to see what data we have about you
- b) to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c) to ask to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d) to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with

the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> (<https://ico.org.uk/>), or telephone 0303 123 1113.

7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas

8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making

9. Your personal data will be stored on a secure government IT system

Your data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible after the consultation has closed, and it will be stored there for the standard 2 years of retention before it is deleted.

-
1. [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/1/chapter/7)
(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/1/chapter/7>)
 2. Only around 36% of the population of England is covered by a parish or town council.
 3. [Local government ethical standards: report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-ethical-standards-report)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-ethical-standards-report>)



REPORT ON: Grant Applications
WRITTEN BY: Deputy Parish Clerk
MEETING DATE: 21st January 2025
AGENDA ITEM: 250/24

Introduction

The 2024/25 budget for Community Grants is £3,000 and £500 has already been awarded to the Hook & Odiham Lions for their prostate screening project. A further £1,670 was awarded to applicants in July which leaves a remaining budget of £830.

The deadline for this round of Community Grant applications was 31st December 2024. There are a total of 3 three applications totalling £1,490.

Full applications have been forwarded to Councillors separately.

Community Grant Applications

Organisation	Amount requested	Total cost of the project	Grant requested for	How many people will benefit
Baker Hall (Scouts and Guides)	£1,000	£12,000	Solar project- The committee are raising money to install solar to reduce costs and become more environmentally friendly.	120 Scouts and Guides plus other local groups. Majority of hall users live within the parish.
Life Education Wessex and Thames valley	£240	£1,060	Provision for 1 educator and resources to visit Mayhill Junior School on 29 January 2025 for 2 days.	241 pupils that attend the school.
Mustard Seed Autism Trust	£250	£500	To purchase a laptop to create resources and information for social media and website for autistic children and their families. The laptop will also be used to secure funding to enable us to continue delivering the projects.	Currently 10 families within the parish but also families within 10 miles of Farnborough including Hart.

For Decision

To consider and agree grant awards from the remaining £830 2024/25 budget.

(Note that the £1,180 held in the community grant earmarked reserve, as identified by the internal auditor, is held for grants previously awarded to Leapfrogs and the Vine Church but not yet paid.



REPORT ON: 2025-26 budget and precept covering report
WRITTEN BY: Parish Clerk
MEETING DATE: 21st January 2025
AGENDA ITEM: 252-53/24

Introduction

Setting the annual budget and precept are critical and statutory tasks for OPC. The Council must make both decisions at the 21st January meeting in order to respond to Hart DC as the charging authority and to meet their deadline.

This covering report gives an overview of key variances and details the papers provided to support the Council's decision.

The budget

The annual budget provides a financial framework to enable:

- Effective service delivery
- Protection and maintenance of the Council's assets
- Provision to deliver the Council's Business Plan and Annual Action Plan

The budget must be calculated and agreed first because this determines the amount of precept required.

Following best practice, the draft budget has been drawn up following extensive research and consultation with members and committees. This process acknowledges OPC's aims set out in OPC's Business Plan;

- Providing value for money - managing budgets to provide value for money whilst allowing improvements and growth to support the future community.

and

- To achieve the best outcomes possible whilst balancing competing demands on resources.

Significant variances from 2024-25 include:

Overheads:

- An increase of £14,000 for staffing costs. This includes increased hours for the Deputy Clerk, increased employer NI costs and provides for the current staffing structure of 3 employees.
- A reduction of £4,000 for professional costs as this budget was increased in 2024-25 in response to public demand to support OPC in responding to a large planning application in the Parish.
- An increase of £2,500 for insurance to cover a direct increases imposed for listed buildings.
- An increase of £2,500 bank interest income to reflect higher income achieved from the CCLA investment.



Amenities:

- An increase of £2,000 for the management of Odiham Cemetery following complaints during the year on grounds maintenance. The increase will help to cover the cost of increased grass cutting.
- An increase of £7,000 for play areas due to the age and condition of some equipment and maintenance of the high amount of timber play equipment (being less durable than metal).
- An increase of £4,000 to cover the direct increase in costs for the new grounds maintenance contracts which will start 1st April. Plus a reduction of £1,000 for bin emptying costs.
- An increase of £1,000 for both The Parish Room and Chapel Cottage maintenance due to recent issues being identified.

Community:

- Community grants has been reduced by £1,000 to reflect OPC's own commitments for asset management and projects which support the community.
- Removal of the £1,500 grant for Spooktacula following the Hook & Odiham Lions decision to step away from the event. This decision was taken in consultation with OPC to reflect the low footfall in recent years and OPC thanks the Lions for organising this popular event for the Parish.

Planning:

- The £1,000 budget for the Neighbourhood Plan review has been removed as Hart DC cover the costs of a Referendum, assuming the Hart Cabinet agree to proceed on 06.02.25.

Projects:

- A reduction of £1,500 in the Climate, Biodiversity and Environment project budget. Related policies are now a legal requirement but time is needed to properly scope OPC's projects.

The draft budget assumes:

- Full occupation of The Bridewell offices (discussions are in progress). Members will be updated under agenda item 259/24.
- No increase in other Bridewell income but current usage and interest indicates this budget income will be achievable next year.
- Full occupation of Chapel Cottage.
- Realistic budgets to effectively manage OPC's grounds and buildings.

If income is not achievable then this will impact on general reserves and will need to be reviewed closely next year.

The draft budget continues to support:

- £4,500 grants to InOdiham towards Bands in The Bury, Odiham Food Festival and Extravaganza.
- The Odiham Book Exchange through a reduced fee for the Library Room. However, it is proposed that their user licence is increased by 10% from £500 to £550 per annum.
- £2,000 community grants to support small projects which benefit local people.
- Financial support to Citizens Advice.
- Projects which support RAF Odiham personnel.



- Financial support for the management of Odiham Common, Broad Oak Common and The Basingstoke Canal.
- Street lighting.

Proposed 2025-26 figures for decision

i)	Budget expenditure	£301,506
	Budget income	£57,940
ii)	Resulting in a precept requirement of	£243,566

Presented papers include the proposed 2025-26 budget and a summary page showing the proposals against previous years.

	Budget	Funded by			Band D		
Year	Budget	Income	Precept	Reserves	Price per Band D Property	Increase	Notes
2019/20	£197,221	£21,565	£165,656 +12.17%	£10,000	£72.46	£12.14 20.12%	Election year. Further virement from general reserves to cover election costs.
2020/21	£187,502	£23,300	£164,202 -0.89%	0	£71.46	£-1.00 -1.39%	First budget from new Council. £10,000 spend from general reserves not required. Full extent of amenities area maintenance backlog unknown.
2021/22	£225,543	£23,200	£190,342.83 +15.91%	£12,000	£81.86	+£10.40 +14.55%	Spend from reserves possible due to underspends 2020-21 resulting from Covid. Staff budget increased to support establishment of OBE.
2022/23	£262,561.50	£52,150	£210,411.50	0	£89.76	+£7.90 +9.65%	Bridewell takeover. Permanent Deputy Clerk role. Rise in service contract costs and building play equipment replacement earmarked reserve.
2023/24	£268,727	£56,653	£212,074 +0.79%	0	£90.13	+36p +0.41%	First full year management of The Bridewell.
2024/25	£279,580 +4.03%	£55,321 -4.13%	£224,259 +5.74%	0	£93.92	+£3.79 +4.2%	
2025/26 Draft 21.01.25	£301,506 +7.84%	£57,940 +4.73%	£243,566 8.61%	0	£101.78	+£7.86 +8.36%	Assumes £10k income from new Bridewell tenant but no increase in general Bridewell lets for this year. Realistic amenities maintenance budget allocation.

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

1000 - General Account		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
Code	Title														
1005	Staff Salaries			76,500.00	55,409.05					85,000.00					
1010	Employers' NI			6,750.00	5,036.52					11,000.00					
1015	Pension Contribution			16,750.00	12,823.01					18,000.00					
1020	Travel			500.00	382.10					600.00					
1025	Training			1,500.00	1,328.43					1,600.00					
1035	Rates			5,800.00	6,310.99					6,500.00					
1040	Telephone and interne			2,400.00	1,923.70					2,700.00					
1045	Office Equipment		157.10	1,000.00	689.02					1,050.00					
1050	IT Support and Back u	116.00		5,000.00	3,035.20					5,000.00					
1055	Postage and consuma			1,000.00	477.76					1,050.00					
1060	Accounts Package			1,400.00						1,500.00					
1065	Bank Charges			400.00	315.09					400.00					
1070	Audit Fees			1,500.00	1,690.00					1,800.00					
1075	Professional Costs			8,000.00	841.22					4,000.00					
1080	Subscriptions			2,500.00	2,380.73					2,650.00					
1085	Insurance			7,000.00	2,889.00					9,500.00					
1090	Election Expenses														
1095	Civic Hospitality			1,000.00	467.12					1,000.00					
1100	Caretaking Equipment			500.00	308.46					500.00					
1105	Room hire			250.00						250.00					
1500	Precept	224,259.00	224,259.00			243,566.00									
1505	VAT														
1510	Bank Interest	6,000.00	5,553.25			8,500.00									
1515	S106 Income														
1525	Other Income		100.00		100.00										

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

SUB TOTAL	230,375.00	230,069.35	139,750.00	96,407.40	252,066.00	154,100.00
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2000 - Amenity Areas

		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
Code	Title	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
2005	Chamberlain Gardens			3,500.00	1,972.44					4,500.00					
2010	Cemetery Maintenanc			20,000.00	12,547.08					20,000.00					
2015	Cemetery rates and w			2,500.00	2,107.04					2,750.00					
2020	Cemetery electricity			400.00	355.80					500.00					
2030	Memorial testing														
2035	Other amenity areas n			6,500.00	4,834.34					9,500.00					
2040	Play Areas			10,000.00	6,684.94					12,000.00					
2050	Allotments - maintenai			1,400.00	698.00					1,000.00					
2055	Allotments - Water			500.00	373.98					500.00					
2065	Tree works			5,000.00	2,750.00					5,000.00					
2070	Bin emptying			6,000.00	3,546.10					5,000.00					
2075	Benches and Noticebo			500.00	225.00					500.00					
2080	Basingstoke Canal			4,100.00						4,036.00					
2085	Broad Oak Maintenanc			500.00						500.00					
2090	Commons Ranger			1,000.00						1,000.00					
2095	Toilets - Maintenance														
2100	Toilets - Power and rat			1,000.00	1,764.80					1,500.00					
2105	Toilets - cleaning			5,900.00	4,259.01					6,200.00					
2110	Parish Room - power i														
2115	Parish room - mainten			500.00						1,500.00					
2120	Chapel Cottage Maint			500.00	1,058.47					1,500.00					
2125	Estate Agent Fees			1,800.00	1,342.35					1,800.00					
2135	Tree Survey			250.00						250.00					
2140	Bus Shelter Maintenar			250.00	15.00					250.00					

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

2150	The Bridewell - set up								
2155	The Bridewell - electric			4,400.00	2,027.19				4,400.00
2160	The Bridewell - gas			4,510.00	4,133.21				6,000.00
2165	The Bridewell - water			220.00	176.55				320.00
2170	The Bridewell - cleanir			6,800.00	5,384.55				6,800.00
2175	The Bridewell - waste			900.00	766.78				1,100.00
2180	The Bridewell - H&S c			2,000.00	1,828.27				3,000.00
2185	The Bridewell - mainte			3,500.00	3,327.53				4,000.00
2500	Chapel Cottage rent	18,840.00	14,130.00					18,840.00	
2505	Burial fees	12,000.00	8,794.50					13,000.00	
2510	Allotment rents	1,100.00	1,341.00					1,400.00	
2515	Allotment Deposits		10.00						
2520	Other income	100.00	11.00					100.00	
2525	The Bridewell - tenant	14,065.00	1,416.69					13,000.00	
2530	The Bridewell - generæ	3,000.00	1,238.80		3.95			3,000.00	
SUB TOTAL		49,105.00	26,941.99	94,430.00	62,182.38	49,340.00		105,406.00	

3000 - Community		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026				Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts		Payments		Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
3005	Annual Parish Assemt			250.00	80.06					250.00	
3010	PR & Pub inc newslett		40.00	3,500.00	1,941.00					3,500.00	
3015	Community Grants			3,000.00	2,170.00					2,000.00	
3016	G Rothery Grant										
3025	Citizens Advice			1,500.00	1,500.00					1,000.00	
3026	Community Awards			250.00	49.48						
3030	Christmas Evening			2,500.00	2,500.00					1,000.00	
3035	Christmas Trees and L			900.00	748.52					1,000.00	
3040	Carols in Bury										

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

3045	RAF Christmas Gifs		1,250.00			1,000.00	
3050	Bi annual box cart race						
3055	Armed Forces Event					1,500.00	
3060	D-Day		1,000.00	1,038.56			
3065	Remembrance		2,000.00	1,075.79		2,000.00	
3070	Promotion of village		1,000.00	270.69		1,250.00	
3075	Survey Subscriptions						
3080	Odiham Book Festival						
3085	Bands in the Bury		1,000.00	1,000.00		2,500.00	
3090	Food Fayre		1,000.00	1,000.00		1,000.00	
3095	Hanging Baskets						
3100	Spooktakula		1,500.00				
3105	Queen's Platinum Jub						
3110	Coronation						
3115	Flags		500.00			500.00	
3500	Community Income						
3505	Event Sponsorship Inc	100.00			100.00		
SUB TOTAL		100.00	40.00	21,150.00	13,374.10	100.00	18,500.00

4000 - Planning		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
4010	NH Plan														
4015	NW and Odiham CAA														
4020	Neighbourhood Plan L			1,000.00	8,671.67										
SUB TOTAL				1,000.00	8,671.67										

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

5000 - Traffic and Transport		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
Code	Title														
5000	Lighting - Maint and ac			5,000.00	4,894.68					5,250.00					
5005	Lighting - energy costs			4,500.00	2,933.51					3,500.00					
5015	Sustainable Transport														
5020	Village Gateway														
5025	Rights of Way			250.00	22.70					250.00					
5030	Speed Indicator Devic			1,500.00	1,203.32					1,500.00					
SUB TOTAL				11,250.00	9,054.21					10,500.00					

7000 - Earmarked		Last Year 2024-2025				Current Year 2025-2026								Next Year	
		Receipts		Payments		Receipts				Payments				Receipts	Payments
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Budget
Code	Title														
7005	Office Rental														
7010	IT Support/Upgrade														
7015	Election Expenses														
7020	Website														
7025	Allotment Deposits				10.00										
7030	Chapel Cottage Depos														
7035	Cemetery maintenanc														
7040	Amenity Equipment Re														
7045	Chapel Building Maint				2,895.00										
7050	Chapel Cottage Maint				955.03										
7055	War Memorial Mainte														
7060	Play Area Replacemer														
7065	Bufton Field Play Area				530.00										
7070	Benches & Noticeboar														

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

7075	Parish Room Maintenance	394.68			
7080	Grounds Maintenance	630.00			
7085	Memorial Testing				
7090	Revaluation of Buildings				
7095	Rights of Way	826.79			
7100	Development of Sustained				
7105	G Rothery Bequest				
7110	Re-energising the Highways				
7115	Conservation Area Ch				
7120	Increasing Biodiversity				
7125	Book Exchange				
7130	Insurance - EMR				
7135	Tree Survey - EMR				
7140	PR & Publicity - EMR				
7145	Subscriptions - EMR				
7150	The Bridewell	1,386.56			
7155	Community Grants				
7160	Platinum Jubilee				
7165	Public toilets R&M	3,111.88			
7170	Floral displays				
7175	Professional Costs				
7180	RAF gifts	1,250.00			
7185	Armed Forces Day	174.83			
SUB TOTAL		12,164.77			

Last Year 2024-2025					Current Year 2025-2026					Next Year				
8000 - Projects		Receipts		Payments		Receipts		Payments			Receipts		Payments	
Code	Title	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Total	Budget
8005	War Memorial			1,000.00										

Detailed Budget Summary

All Cost Centres and Codes (Between 01/01/2026 and 31/03/2026)

8010	Parish Room					
8015	Play Area Replacemer		2,000.00			7,000.00
8020	Supporting High Stree					
8025	Climate, biodiversity &		2,000.00	535.00		500.00
8030	Burial plot provision					
8035	Bridewell works	19,830.00	5,000.00	20,777.47		5,000.00
8040	Benches		1,000.00			500.00
8050	Area of reflection					
8055	The Firs		1,000.00			
8060	South Chapel					
SUB TOTAL		19,830.00	12,000.00	21,312.47		13,000.00

Summary

TOTAL	279,580.00	276,881.34	279,580.00	223,167.00	301,506.00	301,506.00
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Hart District Council

Odiham & North Warnborough Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

Timetable of Proceedings

Tuesday 25 March 2025

Publication of Information Statement and Specified Documents	Thursday 13 February 2025
Publication of Notice of Election	Tuesday 18 February 2025
Last Date for Registration	Friday 7 March 2025
Receipt of Postal Vote Applications and for changes and deletions to existing postal and proxy votes	5:00 pm Monday 10 March 2025
Last day for Voter Authority Certificates	5:00 pm Monday 17 March 2025
Publication of Notice of Poll	Monday 17 March 2025
Receipt of new Proxy Vote Applications	5:00 pm Monday 17 March 2025
First Day to Issue Replacement Lost Postal Ballot Papers	Wednesday 19 March 2025
Last Day to Issue Replacement Spoilt or Lost Postal Ballot Papers	5:00 pm Tuesday 25 March 2025
Receipt of Emergency Proxy Vote Applications	5:00 pm Tuesday 25 March 2025
Day of Poll	7:00 am to 10:00 pm Tuesday 25 March 2025

Dated Monday 13 January 2025