

Wormegay Parish Council

AGENDA

An Ordinary Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st January 2025 starting at 7.00pm in the Wormegay Mission Room. All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted at the meeting. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend.

Sharon Sweet Locum Clerk to Wormegay Parish Council

15th January 2025

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive Declaration of Interests and any requests for dispensation
3. To agree the minutes of the last meeting on 9th December 2024
4. To note that all members have filed their Register of Interest forms and signed the Declaration of Office, and that the Elections Department has confirmed no by-election was requested for the two vacated seats, which are now being advertised with a closing date of 28th February
5. Public forum
 - a) To receive update from Norfolk County Councillor
 - b) To receive update from Borough Councillor
 - c) To hear from members of the public
6. Administrative and Governance Matters
 - a) To consider the whole council training quotation from Norfolk Parish Training & Support
 - b) To approve the payment of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) registration fee of £40, as required for data protection compliance
 - c) To note that payroll has been set up with Ewing Accounts, commencing December 2024, and that any backdated payments due to HMRC will be researched by the Clerk
 - d) To note that council records currently stored locally are being retrieved and will be returned to the Clerk prior to their deposit at the Norfolk Records Office
 - e) To approve the following policies and documents:
 - i. Standing Orders
 - ii. Financial Regulations
 - iii. Code of Conduct
 - iv. Co-option Policy
 - v. Planning Application Policy
 - vi. Publication Scheme & charges
 - vii. Reserves Policy
 - viii. Internal Controls Statement & checklist 24-25
 - ix. General Risk Assessment 24-25
 - x. Data Audit
 - xi. Data Protection Policy
 - xii. Retention of Documents Policy
 - xiii. Privacy Notice
 - xiv. Grants Policy & application form
 - xv. Complaints Policy
 - xvi. Biodiversity Policy
 - f) To note advice on 'Complying with the Biodiversity Duty'
 - g) To agree member responsibility for complying a draft Biodiversity Action Plan during 2025
 - h) To note the Unity Trust Bank accounts have been opened, but the opening deposit cheque has not cleared due to a request from Lloyds for additional information before re-presentation

- i) To note new Lloyds bank charges commencing 14th Jan 2025, £4.25pm
- j) To approve adding the Locum Clerk as a 'full signatory' (with authority to speak to the bank and set up payments but not sign cheques) and to update the business address to the Locum Clerk
- k) To agree on the closure of the Lloyds current account and the transfer of remaining funds to the Unity Trust bank account
- l) To reconsider 9th December 2024 resolution to apply for a Unity Trust Bank card, in light of new information on charges (£50 setup, £3/month ongoing)
- m) To discuss and agree on which banking card should be linked to the Wix website for annual subscription

7. Parish Council Assets

- a) To review progress on the asset register and discuss any amendments
- b) To confirm member responsibility for asset maintenance checks
- c) To confirm member responsibility for SAM2 (traffic speed monitor)
- d) To approve the SAM2 risk assessment and consider any training needs
- e) To receive report on cemetery management
- f) To confirm member responsibility for conducting cemetery general health, safety, and maintenance inspection using the provided checklist

8. Finance

- a) To note the submission of a VAT refund claim to HMRC for £1,888.86, covering invoices dated 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2023
- b) To authorise payments and note any monies received since the last meeting
- c) To review and sign cash book reconciliation
- d) To appoint a member responsible for internal control
- e) To review reserves and consider recommendations
- f) To agree the budget 2025/26* and set the Precept 2025/26

9. To receive information from the SLCC on VE Day 8th May 2025 and discuss any further actions

10. To receive update regarding Tree Preservation Orders for trees within the village

11. To consider planning applications received from Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk: none

12. To note planning decisions and other planning information from Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk:

- a) **24/02062/F** – Dene Lodge at Caste Dene, Castle Road, Wormegay: Extension and alterations to dwelling. Application PERMITTED

13. To receive items for inclusion on the next agenda

14. To confirm meeting dates for 2025: 4th March, Annual Parish Meeting 22nd April, Annual Parish Council Meeting 20th May, 29th July, 16th Sept, 18th Nov

To consider the passing of a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972) that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for item 14 on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information

15. Staffing

MAKE A CHANGE BECOME A LOCAL COUNCILLOR



**IF YOU CARE ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE AND ARE
PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY
JOIN US AND MAKE A LOCAL CHANGE**

Wormegay Parish Council has a vacancy for two (2) councillors to be co-opted to the Council.

No experience or specific skills are required, just a willingness and enthusiasm to help keep Wormegay a vibrant and good place to live.

Please contact the Clerk for further details and an application form.
clerkwormegaypc@gmail.com

Closing date for applications – 28th February 2025



NORFOLK PARISH

TRAINING & SUPPORT

Quotation for whole council training for Wormegay Parish Council

Further to your request for a quotation for whole council training, we can deliver a tailored course at a venue local to you. Sessions are usually 2-2.5 hours starting at 7 pm but timings can be to suit you.

Just select a maximum of six out of the eleven topics listed or let us know what you would like us to cover:

- Background to Local Councils (including all tiers of local government)
- Roles and responsibilities – Clerk/RFO, Councillors, The Corporate Body, Chairperson, the Council as an employer
- Powers and duties
- Meetings (including voting and public participation), minutes and agendas
- The two annual meetings, elections and co-option
- Governance and financial management (including transparency rules if relevant)
- Risk management and insurance
- Planning overview
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- The Code of Conduct

If you would like us to cover all subjects this could be done over two evenings or a whole day.

We find that these sessions can be hugely beneficial in giving councillors the opportunity to receive training together, tailored to your council's needs, and allows the time to discuss topics in a relaxed environment. It is also useful if the Clerk, as part of the team, can attend too.

The fee is £295 for one session, or £550 for two sessions or a whole day, we just ask that you book and pay for the venue. Let us know if you would like us to provide the refreshments.

These prices are valid for 90 days from the date of the quotation.

Our course tutors are experienced, practicing clerks and members of the Norfolk PTS support team.

For more information about what we offer, our other courses and profiles about the course tutors, visit our website at <https://www.norfolkpts.org/>

Julie King
Norfolk Parish Training & Support
01603 857004
team@norfolkpts.org
4 December 2024

Wormegay Parish Council Asset Register 2024-25

This document is currently a work in progress, members are requested to review and advise of any amendments or comments, ahead of the finalised document being presented to council at the March meeting

Asset Description	Date Acquired	Purchase Value Net/Gross /Nominal	Current Value for Insurance	Location/ Responsibility	Est. Life span	Notes
Tommy Statues x3	2024	£551.00 (G)	£551	Village green; narrow bridge; Bardolph Way		
Projector	2024	£1		With Cllr		
Projector screen	2024	£89.99 (n/k)		With Cllr		
Noticeboards	2024	£2421 (G)	£2420	Various		
Bus shelter	n/k	£1136		Hill Estate		
5 grit bins	n/k	£1		Various		
2 litter bins	n/k	£1		Various		Entry in the 2016 asset register
Flagpole & flag	2024	£451.17 (n/k)	£450	Village green		
SAM2 Traffic Sign	2022	£3660 (G)	£3700	Various		Budget to replace battery every 4 yrs Service unit with supplier when needed
Chromebook	2023	£230 (G)	£650	Clerk		Budget to replace laptop every 4-5yrs
Dog bins	2019	£378.74 (n/k)		various		
Defibrillator	2021	£2955 (G)	£1500	Home Cottage, Bardolph's Way, PE33 0SF		Under service contract until 2026 Defib checks done by resident
Marque	n/k			With resident for storage	-	
Village sign	n/k	£1	Est. £2500-5000	Village green		Asset register 2016 shows a sum insured of £600
Village entrance gates and posts	n/k	n/k		Both ends of village		
War memorial (Grade 2 listed)	n/k	£1	£15000 (est.)	Village Green, Castle Road, PE33 0SG	-	Grade 2 listed, must consult Conservation Officer before any maintenance work or cleaning 2025 - an accurate insurance value is required
Benches	2021	£804 (G)		various		

Prepared January 2025

Land at Parish Council Cemetery	1982	£1		Nr St Michael church		
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Disposal list

Asset Description	Date Disposed	Purchase Value Net/Gross /Nominal	Notes
2 Noticeboards	2024	n/k	
Fireman's tower	2019?	£9667	
Pole spin	2019?	£862	
Springy	2019?	£550	
Swings – 4 set	2019?	£1600	
Seats – 2	2019?	£1	
Noticeboards	??	??	

Items not owned by the council, and therefore outside the scope of this asset register, but for which the council has assumed maintenance responsibilities

Maintenance location	Maintenance	Notes
Village Green, Castle Road (TPOs tbc)	Grass cutting* Tree work (number of trees – X)	2025 - ownership of the land should be investigated via NCC; Land Registry; Council minutes; Parish Meetings Date of last tree works: Date of last tree survey:
Oak Tree Bardolchs Way (TPO?)	Tree work	Date of last tree works: Date of last tree survey:
Grass cutting* at: 1. Area adjacent to bridge 2. Bardolchs Way x 2 areas 3. Hill Estate x 2 areas	Grass cutting*	End date of current grass cutting contract: rolling contract

**part of the grass cutting contract that includes the council cemetery*

Wormegay Parish Council

Risk Assessment

Draft SAM2 Sign Management Policy and Risk Assessment

Draft Jan 2025

	Hazardous Event	Consequence	Affected	Management controls	Residual risk and further measures
1	Equipment is sited on a dangerous site	Equipment, vehicles or members of the public are endangered	Equipment and members of the Public	All sites used to be agreed in advance. All new sites be agreed by Highways.	Tolerable No Further Action needed
2	Collision with moving vehicles	People are injured whilst installing the equipment	Volunteers	All sites will be within 30 mph zones. All volunteers to be advised to wear high visibility jackets at all times. Signs only to be fixed or moved in daylight hours.	Tolerable No Further Action needed
3	Obstruction of Footpath	Risk of injury to pedestrians forced to walk in the road to avoid sign	Public	Sign must be fixed to posts as agreed in 1, in such a manner as to not impede footpaths.	Tolerable. No further action needed
4	Distracting moving vehicles	Risk of collision between vehicles or with pedestrians	Pedestrians and vehicle users	Signs to be placed only in identified sites. When fitting signs volunteers are not to make hand signals or gestures to drivers of vehicles. Volunteers must not attempt to stop or direct traffic.	Tolerable. No further action needed

				<p>If confrontation occurs volunteers to stop fitting the sign and if necessary call 999. The Parish Clerk must be notified of any incident.</p>	
5	<p>Personal injury whilst installing or removing the sign or charging the battery</p>	<p>Risk of personal injury</p>	<p>Volunteers</p>	<p>All volunteers to follow the installation guidance issued by manufacturer (attached). Only those who have received a copy of the risk assessment to carry out sign installation.</p> <p>All installations must be carried out by persons over the age of 18 years.</p> <p>Battery charging must be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</p> <p>Training from the manufacturer is available on request.</p>	<p>Tolerable. No further action needed</p>

Installing a Portable



Begin by making sure that a small clip is found on the tamtorque fixing



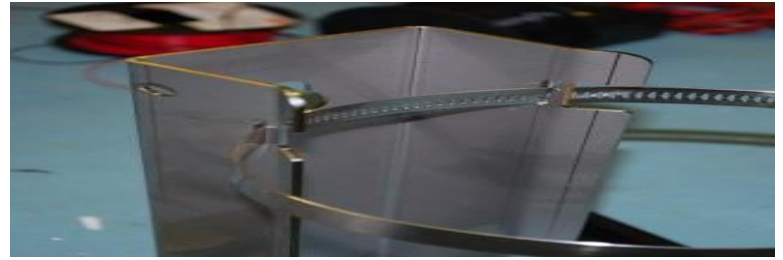
Slide the tamtorque through the two gaps in the bracket and then around the post to which the sign is being fixed onto



Make sure that the bracket is installed with the keyhole cut outs as shown facing outwards; the larger part of the keyhole towards the top with the smaller towards the bottom.



Push the end underneath the tamtorque mechanism as shown on the left



While pushing the fixing in this position, pick up the drill with the tamtorque bit and screw clockwise into the hole as shown on the left. This should then start to tighten around the post.



Before fully tightening the Tamtorque, put the small clip over the spare end to keep it tidy



Carefully lift the sign on the bracket. The sign has two nuts that fit into the keyholes on the bracket. Once inside the keyhole, slide the sign down into the smaller part of the hole. When this is completed, the sign will be securely in place.



Open the sign and place the battery inside. The sign is now installed and ready for operation.

Secure both bracket and sign with padlocks.

Report on Cemetery Management for Wormegay Parish Council

Introduction

This report identifies opportunities for improvement in the management of the Wormegay Parish Council cemetery and proposes steps to ensure compliance with legal requirements and effective administration. The Parish Council, as the Burial Authority, must have an active and accountable role in the management of its cemetery. This responsibility includes ensuring legal compliance and operational effectiveness while continuing to support the PCC in their invaluable role managing burials on-site. The aim is to enhance current practices collaboratively, ensuring a clear division of responsibilities that strengthens the overall cemetery management.

Recommendations

1. Collaboration with the PCC

The Parish Council should engage with the PCC to establish an arrangement that respects their current role while ensuring the council meets its statutory duties. The PCC's continued support in on-site burial management is highly valued. The Parish Council, however, must take responsibility for paperwork, compliance, administration, and overall management.

2. Cemetery Regulations

The cemetery requires updated regulations that are publicly accessible. Draft regulations will be prepared for the next meeting. Once finalised, these should be:

- Published on the Parish Council's website.
- Made available as hard copies upon request.

3. Cemetery Fees

Cemetery fees should be transparently displayed on the Parish Council's website. Draft fees will be presented at the next meeting.

4. Cemetery Plan (Map)

The council must maintain an up-to-date cemetery plan, which should:

- Clearly mark all burial plots.
- Be available to the public, both online and in hard copy.
- Be updated promptly following burials or reservations.

5. Site Identification and Signage

The cemetery, which sits adjacent to the PCC churchyard and is accessed via a break in the hedge, lacks clear signage indicating that it is owned and managed by the council.

Appropriate signage should be installed to distinguish the area and inform visitors of its management.

6. Land Ownership

The council must:

- Ensure the cemetery land is registered with the Land Registry.
- Locate and retain the title deeds for the land as evidence of ownership.

- Confirm whether the land at the cemetery was ever consecrated.

7. Exclusive Rights of Burial (EROB)

Local authority cemeteries should issue Grants of Deed for burial plots, granting exclusive rights for interment or memorial placement. The following actions are recommended:

- Introduce a system for issuing EROB Grants of Deed for all future burials.
- Take advice on issuing retrospective EROB to families of those already buried, with a two-year application window and minimal or waived fees.
- Establish a clear application process, with forms and templates available on the website.

8. Notice of Interment

Funeral directors must complete a Notice of Interment form when notifying the council of a burial. This form should be:

- Published on the website for easy access.

9. Memorial Management

- Only Grant of Deed holders can apply to erect memorials, and memorials must comply with cemetery regulations and be installed by a BRAMM or NAMM registered mason.
- Memorial application form should be on the website and memorial applications should be approved by the Clerk or Full Council as per the regulations.
- Later in 2025/early 2026, the council must commence memorial safety checks, giving proper notice and ensuring the checks are carried out by a suitably qualified person.
- Deed holders are responsible for memorial maintenance and safety. The council should contact owners when works are required for unsafe memorials.

10. Transfer of EROB After Death

Deeds must be legally transferred upon the death of the deed holder. This ensures:

- Compliance with legal rules.
- Only rightful owners can apply for memorial changes or burials.

11. Future Planning for Cremations

The council should consider designating an area for cremations, potentially a small memorial garden. This would cater to future needs and provide additional options for families. The fees would need updating to include interment for cremations.

12. Administrative Responsibilities

The following administrative tasks must be consistently managed:

- Maintenance of the burials book and Grant of Deeds book.
- Issuance of deeds and invoicing of fees.
- Updates to the cemetery plan.

The Clerk should oversee these responsibilities. The council is required to keep cemetery documents in locked and fireproof storage.

13. General Health and Safety

Conduct a general health and safety site check early in 2025 to identify and address any immediate issues related to the cemetery's condition and visitor safety.

Conclusion

The recommendations in this report aim to strengthen and streamline cemetery management practices while maintaining a collaborative and respectful relationship with the PCC. By addressing these areas, the Parish Council can ensure that all legal, administrative, and operational responsibilities are met, and that the cemetery continues to serve the community effectively as a well-maintained and dignified resting place.

Cemetery Management Action Items

Top Priority

1. Prepare draft cemetery regulations for the next meeting.
2. Develop and publish a cemetery fees schedule.
3. Introduce a system for issuing EROB Grants of Deed for future burials and offer retrospective EROBs.
4. Publish a Notice of Interment form on the website.
5. Update the cemetery plan if needed.
6. Carry out a general health and safety site check in early 2025.
7. Engage with the PCC to agree on roles and responsibilities.
8. Confirm whether the cemetery land was ever consecrated with the Diocese.
9. Ensure administrative tasks are managed by the Clerk, including secure storage of records.
10. Consider membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

Middle Priority

1. Ensure memorial management complies with regulations and plan for safety checks in 2025/2026.
2. Consider cemetery management training for those involved with the management of the cemetery.
3. Consider cemetery management software. See Appendix A

Middle/Low Priority

1. Install signage to clearly indicate the council's management of the cemetery.
2. Locate the title deeds, engage a solicitor to register the cemetery land with the Land Registry.
3. Plan for a cremation area and update fees accordingly.

APPENDIX A

Cemetery Management Software for Compliance

Cemetery management software offers significant benefits, including streamlined record-keeping, efficient generation of documentation, and secure, compliant data storage. There is an annual subscription cost for this type of software.

For small cemeteries like Wormegay, with only two burials since 2017, the cost of such software may appear disproportionate. However, as the Parish Council is the Burial Authority, it has legal and statutory obligations to maintain and retain key documents indefinitely under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 77). These include the Register of Burials, Register of Purchased Graves, Cemetery Plan, and records of memorials, as well as applications for interment and memorial permits, certificates of disposal, and copies of EROB Grants of Deed.

Cemetery management software could ensure these obligations are met efficiently by providing secure digital backups, cloud storage, and options for uploading scanned documents. This reduces the risk of data loss, fire damage, or physical deterioration while enabling records to be retrieved easily and shared when necessary.

It is recommended the costs of different software suppliers should be researched later in 2025.

WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL
Health, Safety and Maintenance Checklist to be carried out on annual basis

Name of Person carrying out the inspection	Date of completion

General	Y/N	Comments
Are the rules of the cemetery clearly displayed, including a contact number of the clerk to report issues to?		
Is the noticeboard in a good state of repair? Does it require cleaning or other maintenance?		
Headstones/ Memorials		
Are any headstones visibly unstable/unsafe?		
Have any headstones been damaged/vandalised?		
Bins & Waste		
Is there a wheelie bin in situ?		
Are there any needles/broken glass or other sharps on site? If so, please remove and package before disposal.		
Are there any hazardous litter/items on site?		
Surfaces		
Please note any deep pot holes/mole hills within walkways and any other surface hazards on site which could present a trip or fall hazard.		
Are all pathways clear and well maintained?		

General		Comments
Is there evidence of unauthorised vehicle use?		
Access		
Are gates easily operated, i.e. opening mechanisms work adequately?		
Can disabled persons access and use the site and its facilities?		
Is there easy access and egress to the site and walkways, i.e. no vegetation or other obstructions impede access?		
Trees and hedges		
To the best of your knowledge and ability are any trees visibly in poor condition, in need of felling or cutting back? Are any boughs/ branches hanging and in need of removal?		
Does the perimeter hedge need to be cut?		
Memorial Garden		
Is the bench in a good state of repair?		
Are the memorial plaques firmly set?		
Is the paving in a good state?		
Housekeeping		
Are all areas generally clear and tidy, i.e. minimal litter, etc?		
Is there any general evidence of anti-social behaviour?		
Boundary Wall and railings		
Is there any evidence of further significant deterioration or damage to the wall?		

General		Comments
Do any loose stones or material require removal?		
Are any railings and fencing elements intact? Please ensure they do not present a hazard to anyone.		
Do the railings require painting?		

Additional hazards identified	Assessor's Comments

Send this form to the Clerk for actioning

Jan 2024 payments for approval

Invoices due for payment but received after the issuing of this agenda may be considered.

Payee	Amount	Description
S Sweet	£1584.00 est.	Locum Clerk salary & PAYE (12.24 & 01.25)**
Wormegay PCC	£ 150.00	Room Hire – Mission room 06.24 to 03.25
ICO*	£ 40.00	Registration fee
Hodsons Office	£ 7.72	Office supplies (folders)

*Information Commissioners Office

**awaiting payroll

Wormegay Parish Council

Prepared by *S Sweet*

Reviewed by _____

Bank reconciliation 29th Nov 2024

Cash in hand 01/04/2024 £18,012.12

ADD

Receipts £ 6,100.00

LESS

Payments £ 4,589.18

Cash in hand 29th Nov 2024

(as per cash book) £19,522.94 (A)

Bank statement 29th Nov 2024 £20,028.97

LESS

Unpresented payments £ 506.03

£19,522.94 (B)

(A) = (B) reconciliation complete as of 29th Nov 2024

Reserves Report

General Reserve

It is recommended that a council of this size maintain a General Reserve equivalent to approximately 12 months' Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE).

If the council adopts the recommendations below, the General Reserve would fall within range.

Earmarked Reserves

It is recommended to earmark the following funds in the accounts under earmarked reserves:

- **Parish CIL (£734.40):** Reserved for new infrastructure projects (must be earmarked).
- **Election Costs (£2,500.00):** To cover potential future election expenses.
- **HR Fund (£2,500.00):** For HR-related costs, including payroll issues, recruitment, and locum clerk cover.
- **Cemetery (£0.00):** Recommended to save burial fees here for long-term maintenance.
- **Asset Maintenance/Repairs (£2,500.00):** For planned or emergency repairs to council assets.

Total Earmarked Reserves: £8,234.40

Summary

- **General Reserve (recommended level):** £11,000 approx
- **Earmarked Reserves:** £8,234.40
- **Total Reserves: £19,234.40**

- **Cash in hand** - as of 29th Nov 2024 this was **£19552.94**. A forecast to year end is not available due to time constraints.

These additional earmarked reserves ensure the council is financially prepared for operations, projects, and unforeseen costs. Earmarked reserves can be amended as needed.

Sharon Sweet PSLCC

**WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL
THREE YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON
2025-26**

**BUDGET (n/k
if NET or
GROSS)
23-24**

**PAYMENTS
known as at
31.12.2024
(GROSS)
24-25** **FORECAST
to yr end
31.03.2025
(GROSS)**

**DRAFT
NET Budget
2025-26**

NOTES for 2025-26

Payments

Council Administration

<u>Staff Costs</u> - Clerk Salary incl. PAYE & Arrears	£ 2,446.00	£ 487.94	£ 3,487.94	£ 4,290.00	<i>est 5 hrs pw 6 meetings per yr (SCP18), recommend HR reserve</i>
<u>Staff Costs</u> - Employer NI wef April 2025	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	employer NI costs commence at £5,000
<u>Staff Costs</u> - Employer pension contributions	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	lower qualifying earnings threshold = £6240
<u>Staff Costs</u> - PAYE arrears	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	*not known, recommend HR reserve
PAYE arrears interest & charges	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	*not known, recommend HR reserve
Clerk expenses (WFH; mileage)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 360.00	WFH allowance and mileage to meet Internal Auditor
Office supplies (paper; ink; stamps)	£ -	£ -	£ 60.00	£ 200.00	stamps & paper etc
Council website & email costs	£ 100.00	£ 201.60	£ 201.60	£ 211.00	5% increase
Council phone	£ -	£ -	£ 120.00	£ 120.00	est at £10pm
Training	£ 300.00	£ 88.00	£ 88.00	£ 600.00	
Insurance	£ 493.00	£ 563.80	£ 563.80	£ 620.00	increase 10%
Subscriptions	£ 67.00	£ 61.00	£ 113.00 *	£ 560.00	ICO; NPTS; SLCC; Acc's; NALC; ICCM (see page 2)
Payroll services	£ -	£ -	£ 100.00	£ 160.00	*does not include additional work, recommend HR reserve
Audit	£ -	£ 84.80	£ 414.80	£ 310.00	Internal Auditor £100 & External Auditor £210
Meeting room hire	£ -	£ 290.00	£ 290.00	£ 150.00	£15 x 10 (bi-monthly plus up to 4 extra)
Bank charges	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 72.00	if banking is moved to Unity Trust Bank - £6 pm
election costs	£ 200.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	

Grants & donations

Community grants	£ 800.00	£ 351.50	£ 351.50	£ 600.00	(3 x £200 - £200 historically been the maximum under the grants policy)
S137	£ 50.00	£ 551.00	£ 590.00	£ 50.00	poppy wreath only (last yr included the tommy soliders)

Assets & Open Spaces

Dog bins	£ -	£ 342.58	£ 342.58	£ 300.00	
Asset - maintenance	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 600.00	<i>council needs to consider assets requiring maintenance</i>
Asset - replacement/new	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	<i>council needs to consider any new assets or replacement assets</i>
Grounds maintenance	£ 1,712.00	£ 760.00	£ 760.00	£ 900.00	increase 20%
Tree work & surveys	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,000.00	<i>council need to consider tree survey and tree work</i>

Cemetery

Cemetery maintenance & improvements	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
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Other

Contingency - unplanned spend	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 500.00	<i>potentially - cemetery and VE Day</i>
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TOTAL PAYMENTS £ 6,168.00 £ 3,782.22 £ 7,483.22 £ 11,603.00 payments equals receipts

**WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL
THREE YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON
2025-26**

	ACTUAL	FORECAST TO YR END NET Budget (as at Oct 24-25 2024)		DRAFT NET Budget 2025-26	NOTES for 2025-26
Receipts					
Other Income					
Grants and Donations	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
VAT reclaimed	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Other Income	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 200.00	est interest if an instant access saving acc is opened (£10000 deposit)
Cemetery					
Grant of deed, burial & memorial fees	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Precept					
Precept	£ 6,100.00	£ 6,100.00	£ 6,100.00	£ 11,403.00	BUDGET LESS OTHER INCOME = PRECEPT REQUIRED
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£ 6,100.00	£ 6,100.00	£ 6,100.00	£ 11,603.00	receipts equals payments

***Subscriptions breakdown**

ICO	£ 35.00	DDM
NPTS	£ 60.00	
NorALC	£ 120.00	est
SLCC	£ 100.00	
ICCM	£ 95.00	
Accounting software	£ 150.00	est
Parish Online	£ -	
TOTAL SUBS	£ 560.00	

Precept Notes

The Precept appears to have been approx £6,100 since 2016
 Since 2016, inflation has risen by approx. 34%
 2025-26 Tax base = 139.80
 Precept per tax paying household based on this draft budget **£81.57pa** or **£1.56pw**

RESERVES REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

Cash in hand (bank balance) £ 20,028.97

EMR - Parish CIL	£ 734.40
EMR - Election costs	£ 2,500.00
EMR - HR fund	£ 2,500.00
EMR - Cemetery	£ -
Asset maintenance/repairs	£ 2,500.00
TOTAL Earmarked reserves	£ 8,234.40
General Reserve	£ 11,794.57

CIL - must be in earmarked - use for new infrastructure
 Elections - recommended to hold funds for potential elections
 HR Fund - HMRC late fees, payroll extra work, recruitment, future Locum needs
 Cemetery - recommend all burial fees are set aside for long term maintenance
 Assets - planned or emergency needs of existing assets

General Reserve = approx 12 months expenditure, as recommended

VE DAY 80, A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION, 8 MAY 2025

Beacon and lamp light lighting,
flags of celebration, garden
and street parties



Bruno Peek



Bruno Peek CVO OBE
OPR – Pageantmaster,
provides insights into
the arrangements for
the upcoming VE Day
80th anniversary
celebrations, how local
councils and others
within their community
can take part, and
encourages everyone
to make this shared
moment of celebration on 8 May 2025 the biggest
and the best to date.



VE Day 80, a shared moment of celebration, 8 May 2025

Following the enormous success of D-Day 80, in which over one thousand beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace were lit at 9.15pm on 6 June 2024, commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, on 6 June 1944, we are now focusing our efforts on the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2025, celebrating the end of the war in Europe and WWII as a whole. We continue to encourage the lighting of beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace at 9.30pm, the raising of a unique VE Day

80 Flag at 9am, and where possible, holding parties of celebration throughout the day in the streets, gardens at home, church and village halls, pubs, clubs, hotels and all other manner of locations throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories. We also encourage the eating of fish and chips, as was part of D-Day 80 too, in tribute to the fisherman that fished the seas having to constantly avoid the mines laid around our shores and the prowling German submarines, as well as the farmers and land girls that toiled the fields not knowing if loved ones would return, to keep the nation fed during the dark days of WWII, along with the millions that paid the ultimate sacrifice during these dreadful dark days of war.



Beacon Knole Hill 2 June 2022.
A Bonfire Beacon Farmer

VE DAY 80 beacons (9.30pm)

There are four types of beacons being lit for the occasion:

- Bonfire Beacon
- VE Day 80 Bishops Frome Strawman
- VE Day 80 Beacon Brazier
- VE Day Gas-Fuelled beacons

The details regarding these can be found on pages 6 – 10 of the 'VE Day 80 Anniversary Guide' which will be sent to all town, parish and community councils via county associations and One Voice Wales.

VE Day 80 Lamp Light of Peace (9.30pm)

In a similar way to D-Day 80, there are many local councils, churches, care homes, hospitals, pubs, hotels and individual families etc, that would like to take part in the VE Day 80 celebrations but are lacking resources or land to light a beacon. We encourage them to purchase a reusable 'Lamp Light of Peace', providing an extremely cost efficient, simple and meaningful way to take part, with the lamp's ruby red colour representing the ultimate sacrifice made by brave men and women throughout the world who sacrificed so much during WWII, fighting for the freedom we all enjoy today, and its flame representing the 'light of peace' that emerged from the darkness of so many years of war. The lamp is such an ideal way for local councils and communities to take part at only a cost of £55.00 including VAT, post and packaging for one lamp (those with existing lamps are being asked to light these).

With this in mind, we would like to encourage every city, borough, district, community, town, and parish council to take part in this special celebration with a Lamp Light of Peace, using this celebration to pay tribute to those within their local communities that undertook so much for us all during WWII, especially as we must use every opportunity possible these days to help promote peace around the world.

We would like the lamps to be lit at **9.30pm** on 8 May 2025, coinciding with the lighting of the beacons that night, and once lit for this occasion, they can be re-lit again at 11am on 11 November in 'Remembrance' for many years thereafter. Please visit <https://lamplightofpeace.co.uk/> for more details.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54 >

CONTINUED > VE DAY 80, A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION, 8 MAY 2025

Beacon and lamp light lighting, flags of celebration, garden and street parties

VE Day 80 Tribute (9.30pm)

All those taking part, whether they be lighting beacons, Lamp Lights of Peace or holding a party, are being encouraged to stop what they are doing at 9.30pm, and read out the following Tribute by a nominated individual, bringing the nation together at this one moment in time.

The Tribute

Let us remember those who gave their lives at home and abroad, whose sacrifice enables us to all enjoy the peace we have today.

Let us remember those who came home, wounded, physically and mentally, and the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned to restore their relationships and rebuild their working and family lives after years of conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost husbands, wives, sons, daughters and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen and women of other nationalities and faiths from Commonwealth and allied countries - who fought, suffered and died during six years of war.

Let us remember those in reserved occupations and the brave people who kept us safe on the home front - the doctors, nurses who cared for the wounded, the men and women who toiled in the fields, the fisherman who fished the seas, those who worked in the factories and the air-raid wardens, the police officers, firemen, ambulance drivers and the young people of the Scouts and Guides who played such a vital role in the war effort at home too.

God Save The King



Community Bonfire Beacon



VE Day 80 Flag of Celebration (9am)

The Nation will come together in joyous celebration at 9am on 8 May, by raising the unique VE Day Flag, uniting the Nation in remembering the sacrifices made by so many, many millions throughout WWII – 'lest we forget'. I encourage all city, borough, district, community, town and parish councils, as well as other organisations such as churches, individuals, care homes, hospitals, stately homes, forts, castles, and hotels etc, to take part in this simple act of celebration by raising the official VE Day 80 flag. Please see page 13 of the 'VE Day 80 Anniversary Guide' for more details.



VE Day 80 Empire Medal Pin Badge

Empire Medals has crafted a beautiful pin badge to celebrate VE Day 80, which can be purchased and worn by individuals during the build up to 8 May, on the day itself, and many days

thereafter if they so wish. It can also be used as a personal tribute to past family members involved throughout WWII, in helping to secure the peace that allows us all to celebrate this important anniversary. More information is available at <https://www.empiremedals.com/>.

Past VE Day celebrations. Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum



EQUINOX by UAS
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EQUINOX UAS



Past VE Day celebration in the Street.
Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.

VE Day 80 street and garden parties (throughout the day)

Even though Thursday 8 May 2025 is not a public holiday, we encourage those with country parks and streets that can be closed, along with those that have gardens, to hold street and garden parties decked in flags and bunting, dressing up in fancy dress or uniform, along with those communities that have town, village and community halls etc, to organise VE Day parties within them, decorating them in a similar fun way. We also encourage care homes, pubs, hotels and restaurants to undertake similar, turning their lunch times on 8 May into a party for the children attending.

The Four Peaks – Mount Snowdon, Scafell Pike, Slieve Donard and Ben Nevis

Four pipers will be playing Battle's O'er from the top of the four peaks at 12noon on 8 May which has been especially written for this historic occasion by Stuart Letford MBE, and they will be followed by members of Walking With The Wounded who will be lighting beacons at the top of the peaks at 9.30pm in tribute to the fallen of WWII, as their contribution to VE Day 80.

Promotional tips

Invitations: Extend an invitation to your HM Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, or local dignitary to light your beacon or lamp, or even **more importantly**, a young person, as they are the future, and we need to encourage as many of them as we can to keep assisting the world in the promoting of peace.

Social media: Use the power of social media channels to promote your involvement in VE Day 80 and post your photographs of your beacon lighting and any other activities you will be taking part in.

TV, radio and newsprint: Make contact with your regional and local TV stations, local radio and newspapers, informing them of your involvement in VE Day 80. We will be providing you with an overall press release outlining the overall plans for celebrating this important anniversary celebration, enabling you to affix it to your plans. **Please** remember to include your own contact details, enabling them to contact you directly.



Registration of events

Please register your involvement by providing the following by 30 April 2025 to brunopeek@mac.com.

Name of country: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands, Isle of Man:

Name of county:

Name of city, borough, district, town, parish:

Name of organisation:

Name of organiser:

VE Day beacon – Yes/No:

VE Day Lamp Light of Peace – Yes/No:

VE Day Flag – Yes/No:

Street party – Yes/No:

Garden party – Yes/No:

Party elsewhere – Yes/No:

Email:

Public or Private event:



NORFOLK PARISH TRAINING & SUPPORT

Clerk Recruitment for Wormegay Parish Council

Introduction

This proposal is in response to an enquiry from Wormegay Parish Council's Locum Clerk to support the recruitment of a new Parish Clerk.

NPTS is able to assist the Council with all stages of the recruitment process from writing a job description and job advert, being part of an interview panel, and preparing the employment contract.

Recruitment

NPTS will use its experience in recruiting and inducting both locum and permanent clerks to assist the Council to:

1. write the job description, person specification and job advert, making recommendations for number of hours and salary range for the role
2. recommend where to advertise
3. undertake an initial sift of applications, provide interview questions for the recruitment panel
4. attend the interviews in an advisory capacity
5. prepare the employment contract, contact referees and write to unsuccessful candidates

The Council will need to identify 2 or 3 councillors who will be involved in the recruitment process.

Timescale

A recruitment process typically takes 4-8 weeks to complete, depending on candidate and interview panellist availability, the new clerk's start date preferences, and when decisions are made.

Cost

Desk based support covering 1, 2, 3 and 5 above – **£200.00**

Full support including attendance at the interviews (assuming that you interview 3-4 candidates one after another on the same day (1-5 above) - **£700.00**

Julie King
Norfolk Parish Training & Support

<https://www.norfolkpts.org>

01603 857004

4 December 2024

POLICIES FOR APPROVAL



Introduction to Standing Orders

A council may make standing orders for the regulation of their proceedings and business and may vary or revoke any such orders (Local Government Act 1972, sch 12, para 42).

This means that Standing Orders make up a document of 'rules' for a council to follow. Some of these 'rules' are laid down in law and these are in bold, these must not be removed or changed. Other orders, not in bold, are rules to support the governance of a council – how it is organised and administered. Standing Orders may refer to other council policies or regulations which give greater detail about specific items such as Financial Regulations and Data Protection Policy.

Standing Orders inform officers, councillors and the public. They ensure that actions taken by the council are legal, logical, consistent and transparent and they support the internal control of a council i.e. its financial strength.

Order and Adoption of Standing Orders

Note that reference is made to the clerk throughout (Proper Officer of the Council is the legal term) and to the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), who may also be the clerk.

In law the word 'chair' is used, in the case of a Town Council this person is often referred to the 'mayor'. In this document we have used the term 'chair'.

Standing Orders should be reviewed at least every third year or earlier if changes in the law require this. Adoption, review and amendments to Standing Orders should be made by the full council. Standing Orders should have the date of adoption and the date for review.

They should be published on the council's website and a copy given to councillors (in the agreed format).

Where it is necessary for you to enter the agreed procedure for the council or there are alternative options for you to select from, the **text is in red**.

Standing Orders are divided into subject headings, and those headings are taken in alphabetical order. Headings are numbered and then sub-divided.

1. Accounting

- a) Financial procedures to be followed must be detailed in the Financial Regulations (not Standing Orders) of the council and based upon 'Proper Practices' as identified in the most recent version of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils' (<https://www.saaa.co.uk/legislation-guidance/>). One exception is that the law requires Standing Orders to contain details about contracts (see [Contacts and Procurement](#)).

2. Agendas (and summons)

- b) **All items to be decided at a meeting must be detailed on the agenda.**
- c) **The date, time and place of a meeting must be published at least three clear days before a meeting of the council (excluding the day of issue and meeting date, Sundays and bank holidays and days appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning). Publication must be in a conspicuous place in the parish (noticeboards) and, if the receipts and payments of the council are both under £25,000, on the council's website**
- d) **The summons, to include the agenda, must be sent to councillors at least three clear days before a meeting of the council (excluding the day of issue and meeting date, Sundays and bank holidays and days appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning).**
- e) **The agenda/summons must be signed by the clerk and dated.**
- f) Items for inclusion on the agenda should be given in writing to the clerk by a councillor at least 10 days before a meeting.
- g) The chair and the clerk will agree the agenda prior to its publication, the final say on the content of the agenda rests with the clerk.
- h) The agenda and supporting papers shall not disclose or undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.
- i) The agenda should be sent to the district and county councillor(s) representing the council's area. This is an invitation to attend but as a member of the public.
- j) The agenda will detail the following in this order:
 - i. Receipt or approval of apologies for absence
 - ii. Receipt of declarations of interest and consideration of requests for dispensations
 - iii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of last meeting
 - iv. Public participation
 - v. Other items for discussion such as planning matters; financial reports; progress of projects etc.
- k) **The agenda for the annual council meeting must include, as a first item, the election of chair.** Further items may include:
 - i. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, officers and other local authorities

- ii. Review of the terms of reference for committees
 - iii. Appointment of councillors to committees and working parties
 - iv. Review of policies
 - v. Review of membership of external bodies
 - vi. In the year of an ordinary election the re-adoption of the General Power of Competence, if appropriate
- l) The following items can be considered at a meeting even if they are not on the agenda:
- i. to appoint a councillor to chair the meeting (if chair and vice-chair are not present)
 - ii. to defer consideration of an item until a future meeting
 - iii. to exclude the public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest
 - iv. to temporarily suspend the meeting
 - v. to suspend a particular standing order (unless contrary to legislation)
 - vi. to adjourn the meeting
 - vii. to close the meeting
- m) An agenda item, that would result in a reversal of a decision made within the last six months, shall not be included unless requested in writing by 2 councillors.

3. Apologies

- a) A councillor, if unable to attend a meeting, must give their apologies and the reason to the clerk.
- b) **If a councillor fails throughout six consecutive months to attend any meetings of the council, or its committees or sub-committees of which they are a member they cease to be a councillor unless there is a 'statutory' reason for the absence such as military service, or failure to attend is approved by the council. The period begins with the last meeting attended.**

4. Chair

- a) **The council must elect a chair who must be a member of the council.**
- b) **The appointment of chair must be an annual appointment.**
- c) **At the moment when the new chair accepts office the previous chair automatically retires.**
- d) **Following their election, the chair must sign a declaration of acceptance of office unless the council, at that meeting, permits the declaration to be made at or before a later meeting. The declaration must be made in the presence of a member or the council's proper officer and delivered to the council.**
- e) **The person presiding at a meeting may vote and if there is an equality of votes, they may use their second or casting vote. If the item is the election of a chair, then the casting vote, if it is necessary, must be used.**
- f) The casting vote does not have to be used in the same way as the original vote.
- g) **The chair or in their absence the vice-chair (if any) must preside.**

- h) If both are absent the council must appoint some other councillor to preside.**
- i) The decision of the chair regarding any standing order at a meeting is final (with the exception of an order which supports a legal requirement).

5. Clerk

- a) **Duties of the clerk include to convene meetings of the council for the election of a new council chair, occasioned by a casual vacancy in that office; facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors; receive and retain copies of bylaws made by other authorities; serve on councillors in a manner agreed by them, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda of a council meeting; provide in a conspicuous place a public notice of the time, place and agenda of a council meeting.**

6. Code of Conduct and Dispensations

- a) **All councillors must observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council at all times whilst acting or perceived to be acting as a councillor.**
- b) **Code of Conduct complaints must be referred to the District/Borough Council Monitoring Officer, their advice must be followed, and the complaint must not be investigated or considered by the council.**
- c) **All councillors must complete a Declaration of Interests Form within 28 days of taking office.**
- d) **Councillors are responsible for keeping their Declaration of Interest Form up to date and must complete a new form within 28 days of any changes.**
- e) A dispensation request should be sent to the clerk in writing, prior to the meeting starting (see dispensation request form).
- f) A dispensation will be decided by the council or the committee.
- g) **If a dispensation is not granted, the councillor must not take part in the item** and should consider leaving the room, returning to the meeting after the item has been concluded.
- h) **A dispensation may be granted for the following reasons:**
 - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

7. Committees, Sub-committees and Working Parties

- a) **The council may appoint committees and delegate many of their functions to them. Setting the budget and precept, considering an auditor's report or signing AGAR, borrowing money, adopting the general power of competence and adopting or revising the code of conduct are examples of items that cannot be delegated to a committee.**
- b) **The council decides terms of reference for the committee.** e.g. number of meetings, membership, functions, budget (if any), how the chair of the committee shall be appointed.

- c) **A committee will have an agenda, be open to the public, and have minutes.**
- d) The quorum of a committee should be no less than three.
- e) **Non-councillors can be appointed to committees, unless that committee regulates and controls the finances of the council. Non-councillors only get a vote if the function of the committee is the management of land, harbour functions, tourism functions or the management of a festival.**
Non-councillors must abide by the council's Code of Conduct.
- f) A committee may delegate any of its functions to a sub-committee.
- g) Standing Orders of the council shall apply to all committees and sub-committees.
- h) The council may appoint a working party. The council decides the brief of the working party. A working party cannot make decisions. A working party need not have agendas, does not have to meet in public and there is no requirement for minutes, however 'notes' of meetings should be kept.

8. Contracts and Procurement (must be included in Standing Orders)

- a) **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 (including VAT) but less than the published relevant thresholds referred to in 8d below is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- b) 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 officers 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.
- c) Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- d) **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Cabinet Office from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts**

Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules.

9. Councillor Vacancy

- a) **A councillor who wishes to resign must send their written resignation to the chair of the council. Their chair resigns to the council, sending their written resignation to the Clerk.**
- b) **Any vacancy arising must be advertised for a period of 14 days, if a poll is claimed by ten electors a by-election takes place. If no poll is claimed the council must fill the vacancy by co-option as soon as practicable. It is not bound to do this if the vacancy has less than six months to run.**
- c) **The decision to co-opt, along with all decisions, must be made by the majority of councillors present and voting.** Where more than two people have been nominated for co-option, and none has received an absolute majority the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off and a fresh vote taken. The process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote of the chair.
- d) Where more than one vacancy is to be filled by co-option, each vacancy should be considered separately.
- e) **Co-option must be considered at a meeting and is not a valid reason to exclude the public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**
- f) **All councillors must complete their declaration of acceptance of office forms at or before the first meeting after they are elected or if they are co-opted before they take office, unless the council at that meeting permits the declaration to be made at or before a later meeting. The declaration must be made in the presence of a member or the council's proper officer and delivered to the council.**

10. Data Protection (General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018)

- a) **The council must ensure that a written record of its processing activities is maintained.**
- b) **The council must have a Data Protection Policy and procedures in place to respond to data protection enquiries, as well as a privacy statement and a record of any data protection breaches.**
- c) **The council shall have in place, and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure, information relating to personal data held in both hard copy and electronic format, held either by the clerk or by councillors on council or privately owned devices.**
- d) **The council must have in place a Data Audit for the retention and safe destruction of all information including personal information which it holds.**
- e) **Councillors, officers and contractors must have regard to the legislation when considering the processing, sharing or disclosing of personal information.**

11. Debate

- a) Items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear, but the order can be changed at the discretion of the chair. No speech on any item shall be longer than 5 minutes.
- b) An amendment to an item must not negate the original item. It will be voted upon separately and before the original item.

12. Delegation (councillors, the clerk and committees)

- a) No councillor has the authority to issue instructions, or orders to any employee including the clerk or to act on behalf of the council.
- b) The clerk may be given delegated authority to deal with matters, the detail may be included in the Job Description, a scheme of delegation or agreed at a meeting of the council (and minuted).
- c) The clerk may have delegated authority to spend money in the event of an emergency and the detail of this is included in Financial Regulations.
- d) The council may delegate to a committee (see [Committees, Sub-committees and Working Parties](#)).

13. Disorderly Conduct

- a) Disturbance by any member of the public will be followed by a request from the chair to desist. If ignored the chair can ask the disruptive person to leave the meeting.

14. Employment (see [Clerk](#))

- b) **Employees must have a Contract of Employment** supported by a Job Description **on or before the first day of employment**. The Contract must include details of grievance and disciplinary procedures or make reference to separate documents.
- a) The council is an employer, and any matters relating to staff members must be treated confidentially and in accordance with employment law.
- b) A council may appoint a proper officer (clerk) for the discharge of the council's functions, and any other staff as required.
- c) **A council must appoint a Responsible Financial Officer**
- d) The council should appoint a small group of councillors to conduct the clerk's annual appraisal. The clerk will annually appraise all other members of staff.
- e) A council may appoint one or more of its councillors to be officers, but without remuneration. **A period of 12 months after leaving as a councillor, must elapse before payment can begin.**

15. Information Management

- a) **The council must have a Freedom of Information publication scheme displayed on its website and respond to requests for information in line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.**
- b) **The council must publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015 if the receipts and payments of the council are both under £25,000.** If the gross annual income or expenditure exceeds £200,000, the council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.

16. Legal Deeds

- a) A legal deed, on behalf of the council, must be authorised by a decision of the council and signed by two councillors, with the clerk witnessing the signatures.

17. Meetings (see also [Agendas](#))

- 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) **A council must have an annual meeting in May, in an election year this meeting must take place on or within 14 days of councillors taking office.**
- c) **In an election year, if the current chair has not been re-elected as a councillor, they shall still chair the first item at the annual council meeting. They do not have an original vote but must exercise their casting vote in the event of a tie.**
- d) **In addition, a council must meet on at least three other occasions during the year and may hold further meetings as required.**
- e) This council meets **on a Tuesday during the months of January, March, May, July, September & November**, the clerk may call additional meetings as required including for the election of a new chair as and when the role becomes vacant.
- f) Meeting dates for the following year should be set on or before the last meeting of the year.
- g) **The chair may convene, with three clear days' notice, an extraordinary meeting at any time. The public notice giving the date, time and place and the summons sent to councillors detailing the agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the chair.**
- h) **If the chair does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene such a meeting. The public notice giving the date, time and place and the summons sent to councillors detailing the agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- i) **The quorum for a meeting shall be at least one third of the whole number of members of the council (rounded up) and no less than three.**
- j) **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.**
- k) **All decisions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of councillors, and non-councillors with voting rights, present and voting.**
- l) **Voting shall be by a show of hands.** At the request of any councillor, voting may be by signed paper ballot.
- m) **A councillor may ask for the vote to be recorded so that how each councillor voted is recorded in the minutes**, this should be done either immediately prior to or immediately after the vote.
- n) A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours

18. Minutes

- a) Minutes shall include:
 - i. the date, time and place of the meeting
 - ii. the names of councillors and officers who are present

- iii. interests declared
- iv. dispensations granted
- v. when a councillor arrives late, leaves early, or is absent for period of time
- vi. the public participation session
 - i. the decisions made
- b) The minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data.
- c) If issued to councillor prior to the meeting, minutes shall be taken as read.
- d) The minutes of a meeting must be agreed at the same or next meeting of the council and signed by the person presiding at that meeting.
- e) Discussion on the minutes must relate to their accuracy and any amendment must be agreed by the council and signed by the councillor presiding.
- f) **If the receipts and payments of the council are both under £25,000, the minutes, if necessary in draft form, must be published on the council's website within one calendar month of the meeting.**

19. Press

- a) When responding to the press on behalf of the council, officers and councillors must only report on agreed decisions or policies of the council.

20. Public (including press and district, borough and county councillors

- a) Members of the public have the right to attend all meetings of the council
- b) Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public can be required to leave if the council decides that the item is of a confidential nature for one of the following four reasons:
 - i. engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees
 - ii. terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts
 - iii. preparation of cases in legal proceedings
 - iv. the early stages of any dispute
- c) Public Participation time shall not exceed 20 minutes and no one person shall speak for more than 5 minutes, in both cases unless directed otherwise by the chair.
- d) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend. A question does not require an answer at the meeting, if required, the chair will advise when an answer will be given
- e) A person who speaks at a meeting, shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting. The chair shall direct the order of speaking.
- f) A member of the public may film, photograph or make an audio recording of the meeting. This does not allow for oral commentary which would be disruptive.
- g) **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.**

Draft Jan 2025



NORFOLK PARISH TRAINING & SUPPORT

WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (suitable for a council up to £25,000)

Notes and how do adopt these Financial Regulations

Abbreviations:

RFO Responsible Financial Officer

AGAR Annual Governance and Accounting Return

G & A Governance and Accountability – Practitioners Guide produced by JPEG and known as ‘Proper Practices’

GPC General Power of Competence

Notes: Items and actions described by the word “must” are laid down in law – therefore they must be retained. Item 4 (s101) – this is typically £500 for a smaller Council.

1. General

These regulations govern how the council conducts its financial affairs. They set out how all financial matters are dealt with (with reference to Governance and Accountability). The Council must have an RFO. The RFO must administer the finances of the council according to proper practises. Financial Regulations must be approved by full council and must only be amended by full council.

These regulations were approved August 2024 and will be reviewed in July 2025 unless there are changes in local government law, or the Council’s financial activities change or professional qualified advice is received requiring that this is done sooner.

2. Accounting and Audit

- 2.1. The RFO must be responsible for maintaining the cash book, and should complete the year end receipts and payments accounts from the totals in the cash book.
- 2.2. Accounts should be presented showing a comparative previous year. The totals in the accounts are then transferred to the relevant sections of AGAR.
- 2.3. The Council may appoint a member to be an Internal Control Officer, to undertake regular inspections of the cash book, and other financial activities.

- 2.4. A suitably competent and independent person must be appointed by the Council as its Internal Auditor, to undertake an annual review of the council's internal control systems and they must report their findings to the council. This appointment should be made at least three months ahead of the year-end and a quotation should be received for this work. The Internal Auditor must complete the relevant section of the AGAR (page 4). They must make a report to Council which must include any explanations for "No" boxes on page 4. This report must be considered by the Council, prior to signing off the AGAR. Any recommendations must be implemented or reasons why they are not, recorded in the minutes.
- 2.5. The Council must have an agenda item for consideration and approval of the AGAR. Firstly, they consider whether they can and wish to exempt themselves from External Audit, and if so agree and sign (clerk and chairman) the Certificate of Exemption, then they consider and complete the Annual Governance Statement the clerk and chairman sign to confirm and then agree the Accounting Statements, chairman to sign to confirm (this should have already been signed by the RFO). This must be done within statutory time limits, by 30 June.
- 2.6. The RFO must advertise Electors Rights, as required by law to include both the notice and supporting statement.
- 2.7. As an exempt Council, there is no obligation on a smaller Council to have an External Audit. There is a requirement to publish specified financial information, and the RFO must ensure that this is done (refer Transparency Regulations).
- 2.8. The Council must have an item on every agenda where the council's finances can be considered. Reporting on receipts and approval of payments should happen at every meeting with bank reconciliations (i.e. the cash book reconciled to the bank) and budget monitoring to be done at every meeting. This is part of Internal Control.

3. The Budget

The Budget must be constructed referring to the last completed year (both the budget and the actual, the present year (at a half year point), the predicted year-end figures and plans for the next two years. Reserve funds should be identified. The budget must be approved by the Council in time to submit the precept request to the District in January. The RFO must report to Council at the half year point on actual spending against budget highlighting and explaining any significant variances. Significant is 20% over/under budget.

4. Authority to spend

Under LG Act 1972 s101, urgent expenditure of up to £800.00 may be authorised by the clerk, notwithstanding any budgetary provision. Such spending should be reported to the Chairman and then to the Council as soon as possible and the

budget should be amended accordingly. Any items of expenditure may be authorised by the Clerk provided it has been approved by Council and is included within the budget and an invoice has been received, supported by a quotation.

5. Banking

- 5.1. Monies received must be banked on a regular basis by the RFO. Handling cash should involve at least two people, and must be banked intact.
- 5.2. The Council should record in the minutes any changes in the bank mandate. The Chairman should sign the end of year bank reconciliation and bank statement(s).
- 5.3. Direct debit or standing order payments may be permitted, with the approval of Council, for regular items such as utility bills, ICO fee or payroll, or to avoid interest charges being paid. Amounts so paid should be reported to council along with the normal payment schedule.
- 5.4. The RFO may move money between bank accounts without prior approval by the council.

6. Making Payments

- 6.1. Invoices for payment must be checked by the RFO and entered onto a schedule for approval by council. Quotations should be attached to invoices as part of the audit trail.
- 6.2. Payment authorisation
Payments should be made by cheques signed by two authorised councillors.

Where internet banking arrangements have been agreed, two named councillors will be authorised to approve transactions.

- 6.3. Card Payments
The Council has no debit / credit card. Payments may need to be made by the RFO which require the use of a personal debit or credit card. Provided within budget and agreed by council, this may be done and the RFO refunded.

7. Salaries

The RFO must ensure that all salary and other relevant payments comply with PAYE and other rules issued by HMRC and are approved by council. Any change in salaries must be agreed by the Council. Expenses to be refunded to officers, must be supported by detailed invoices.

8. Loans, Balances and Investments

The Council has no loans, but if any were needed this would require full council approval. End of year balances must identify the Working Balance and Reserves held and their purpose.

9. Receipts

The RFO shall issue invoices promptly and the Council must have agreed collection arrangements, issuing a statement after 30 days. Irrecoverable amounts can only be written off by the Council, following a report from the RFO.

10. VAT

Claims and returns should be completed promptly by the RFO (at least annually).

11. Placing Orders

Before placing an order one written quotation is required for items costing up to £1,000. For items costing £1,000 - £5,000 two quotations should be obtained before committing to expenditure. For items costing £5,000 – £10,000 three written quotations should be obtained. Items between £10,000 and up to £25,000 should be detailed in a tender document. For items costing in excess of £25,000 see **Contracts** below.

12. S137 Payments – Councils without GPC

The RFO should check that the council has the necessary power to incur the expenditure. S137 payments should be identified in a separate column of the cash book and be identified as such (and minuted) at the meeting at which they are approved.

13. Contracts

For capital projects and other contracts estimated to cost in excess of £25,000 the council's Standing Orders "Contracts and Procurement" must be followed. These must be detailed in full in Standing Orders.

14. Stores

The Council keeps no stores, other than miscellaneous items such as stationery.

15. Assets and Insurances

- 15.1. An asset register must be maintained by the RFO and reviewed annually by the Council.
- 15.2. The asset register must contain detail of the valuations of the assets i.e. cost price or replacement cost and the site of the asset. The total valuations figure is transferred to Box 9 of AGAR.
- 15.3. The Council may consider maintaining assets through an Earmarked Reserve.
- 15.4. Assets should be inspected annually and details should be recorded.
- 15.5. Surplus assets must be disposed of, with the approval of council, for the best possible price.

15.6. The Council has an insurance policy which is reviewed annually, and which must include Employers Liability and Fidelity Guarantee. Public Liability Insurance, while not mandatory, should be included in the policy. The Council should forward a copy of the asset register to their insurer and arrange appropriate cover.

16. Risk Management

The Council needs to be aware of the significant risks that it faces and decide how to manage them. The risks must be assessed and action taken to minimise the risk. This must be recorded in a Risk Management Document. The identified schedule of risks included in this document must be risk assessed using the Risk Matrix in G&A as well as identifying ways of minimising risk. Examples of this, include insurance, inspections and risk assessments. The RFO must be responsible for this document and the Council must review this annually.

DRAFT Jan 2025

Chairmans signature

Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/it's functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**

- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**

- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

<p>You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority b) any body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
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Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Wormegay Parish Council

Co-option Policy

1. Background

The process for co-option is only partially prescribed in law but there is best practice advice and guidelines around certain aspects of the process. Items marked in bold are prescribed in law.

2. Scope and purpose

This policy aims to explain the procedure regarding co-option. The information contained in it is to be used by members of the council and members of the public. The aim of the policy is also to show that the council endeavours to treat all applicants fairly and alike, and to ensure that the process is also seen as fair, open and transparent. This policy details the processes to be followed regarding co-option.

3. When a vacancy arises

A co-option vacancy arises when a member of the Council leaves, and the position is formally advertised for 14 days. At the end of this 14-day period if insufficient names have submitted a request to the Borough Council to call for an election (this is 10 names) then the Council can fill the vacancy by co-option. (Refer Local Government Act 1972 s86 and 87(2)(b))

3.1 Applications

We aim to encourage applications from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand. Councillors or parishioners can approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option. Co-option vacancies will be advertised on the website and on the noticeboards and in media releases. The advertisement for the co-option will include:

- a) Method by which applications can be made, this will be in writing to the Clerk
- b) The closing date for applications
- c) Contact point for potential candidates to obtain more information – the Clerk
- d) Advice that further information is available electronically via the website – a form to complete which includes a maximum of 100 words asking the candidate why they would like to be a councillor; name; address and other contact details.

When applications are received, the Clerk will confirm eligibility. Any candidate found to be offering inducements will be disqualified.

3.2 Attendance following an application

All eligible candidates shall be invited by letter, to attend the next council meeting following the application deadline. They will be asked to confirm their attendance at the meeting. In the event of candidates being unable to attend, this meeting will not

be rearranged. All members receive copies of applications ahead of the meeting. Applications are to be treated as confidential. A candidate, on confirming that they will attend the meeting will be sent a copy of the agenda and agenda papers.

4. Commitment

The council is keen that potential candidates understand the commitment which is required from councillors. Anyone interested in standing will be encouraged to look at the website for more information on the role of being a councillor and will receive an information sheet on the work of the council. Candidates will also be told that they are expected to attend an Induction training event which may be held externally or in the parish.

5. The process of Co-option at the Council meeting

There is an early agenda item at which each candidate will be asked to make a brief verbal presentation on why they would like to be a councillor and the skills they can offer the council (3 minutes maximum per candidate). All of this, including the voting for the candidate will be in public. Candidates may be asked questions by members. In the event of a candidate being unable to attend, his / her application will still be considered by members. In the event of a candidate being related to a councillor, then the councillor would be expected to declare an interest and request a dispensation to speak and vote.

6. Voting

Only councillors present at the meeting may vote. There will be one vote per vacancy to be filled (Chairman may have a casting vote). **The successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12). If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again. The process is to be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

7. Any previous election

The council does not consider claims of candidates who were unsuccessful at previous elections.

8. Starting as a councillor

The successful candidate(s) are asked to start as a councillor immediately after completing their declarations of acceptance of office. **The fact that the new member has not received a summons does not make his / her attendance as a councillor illegal** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12, para 10(3)). Where appropriate they will also be appointed to any council committee. If an absent candidate is successful, members must agree to him / her signing the declaration of acceptance of office before or at the very start of the next meeting. New councillors will also be made aware of the fact that Interests Forms will need to be completed within 28 days of co-option.

9. Filling a Co-option vacancy

The council must fill co-option vacancies as soon as practicably possible.

Draft Jan 2025

Co-option Application Form

This form is to be used for anyone seeking co-option onto Wormegay Parish Council.

Qualifications to be a Councillor

A person is qualified to be a councillor if they are a British, Commonwealth or European Union citizen and on the day of co-option are 18 or over.

In addition, the person must meet at least one of the following criteria

1. on the day of co-option and thereafter they continue to be on the electoral register for the parish, or
2. during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the parish, or
3. during the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the parish, or
4. during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the parish or within three miles of it.

To be completed:

I confirm that I am over 18 and a British/Commonwealth/European Union citizen (*please delete as appropriate*)

Please indicate which of the four criteria above you meet, include all that apply:

Certain people are disqualified from standing, and these include paid officers (including the clerks) of the council, bankrupts and those subject to recent sentences of imprisonment. If you think that you may be disqualified please check the following information on the Electoral Commissions website:

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/141784/Part-1-Can-you-stand-for-election-LGEW.pdf or contact the clerk.

For councillors to be able to consider your suitability for co-option, please use the box below to explain why you would like to be a councillor, maximum 100 words.

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Contact Details:

Name	
Address	
Email address	
Home telephone number	
Mobile telephone number	

Please send the completed form to the parish clerk:

clerkwormegaypc@gmail.com

Wormegay Parish Council

Policy Regarding Consultation on Planning Applications

Wormegay Parish Council has set up a Planning Advisory Group and given delegated powers to the Parish Clerk.

Background

Wormegay Parish Council is mindful that it has an important role in relation to planning applications as a consultee in the planning process. Responses to those applications must be within a specified time frame, usually 21 days. There is a need for transparency in this process. This policy is written to explain how the council will deal with planning applications so enabling both Councillors and the public to involve themselves effectively with that process.

Responses to planning applications

New planning applications are emailed to the Parish Council by the Borough's planning dept, they can also be accessed via the Borough Council's Planning Portal. It is the role of the Parish Clerk to bring to Council's attention any planning application requiring a Parish Council response. There is a 21-day deadline for responses.

Dealing with applications at Parish Council meetings

Where possible, the Parish Council will consider planning applications at its meetings and those applications will be detailed on the agenda. In the event of them being received after the closure of the agenda they will be reported to the Chairman and members as being received and details will be posted on the Parish Council's website advising of their inclusion in the upcoming meeting. Members should view all documents relating to an application online at the Borough Council's website prior to the Council meeting to ensure meetings do not overrun.

The Parish Council will consider applications in line with the Borough's Council's Planning Policy guidelines and 'material consideration' which includes, but is not limited to:

Amenity, appearance of the development, conservation, design, effect on wildlife, highway safety, historic buildings, loss of light or privacy, noise, overshadowing of your home, traffic and parking issues, loss of sunlight.

Issues which cannot be taken into account are civil matters and include:

Boundary disputes, construction noise, effect on property values, loss of view, private rights

Dealing with applications outside of the Parish Council meeting

The Parish Council has set up a Planning Advisory Group (PAG) made up of all Parish Council members. The Parish Council has also given delegated powers to the

Parish Clerk in respect of planning applications. In the event of an application being received just after a meeting, and where no extension is possible, then the PAG will advise the Clerk of their comments on the application electronically within the 21-day consultation period. The Clerk will then respond to the Planning Authority from the information provided, with the powers under Local Government Act 1972 authorising delegation to the Clerk.

In the event of an application being received which could be controversial, the Chairman and Clerk could convene a special meeting to consider the application. A quorum of three members (minimum) is required for any meeting.

The Borough Council Planning/Development Control Committee has the final say on all applications, and the Parish Council is only one of many consultees in the process. Parishioners can write to the Borough Council with their views on planning applications which are published on the planning portal.

Draft Jan 2025

Wormegay Parish Council Data Audit

Date of Audit: Jan 2025

Conducted by: Clerk to the Council

1. Personal Data Held by the Council

Type of Data	Source	Purpose for Holding	Storage Method	Retention Period	Shared With
Names of councillors	Councillors	Administrative purposes, contact and records	Secure electronic storage	Duration of term + 1 year	ICO, website (where applicable)
Contact details of residents	Residents (direct communication)	Responding to queries, consultation, or service provision	Secure email and hard copies	1 year unless ongoing query	Parish Council, District or County Council (with consent)
Names and details of allotment holders	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Burial records	Burial applications, funeral directors, families of the deceased	Legal obligation to maintain burial records, ensure accurate record-keeping of interments, and respond to enquiries.	Secure physical registers, to be stored in fire proof storage	Permanent (in line with LACO 1977 requirements for burial records)	Parish Council, relevant councils, MoJ, ICCM (if needed).
Financial details	Residents, staff, suppliers	Payments, payroll, and invoicing	Secure accounting software	7 years (legal obligation)	Bank, auditors
Email addresses	Residents and other authorities	Communication and correspondence	Secure email system	Duration of correspondence	None unless resolving query
Names and contact details of volunteers	Volunteers (direct communication)	Coordination of volunteer activities, contact in emergencies	Secure email system, physical records	Duration of volunteering	None unless legally required

Type of Data	Source	Purpose for Holding	Storage Method	Retention Period	Shared With
Children's data	Parents/Guardians	Consent-related or community engagement purposes	Secure electronic or hard copy	Until purpose is fulfilled	None

2. Data Collection and Consent Mechanisms

- **Privacy Notices:** Issued for specific activities for example allotment agreements or mailing lists.
- **Consent Records:** Maintained for activities relying on consent (e.g., newsletters).
- **Sources:** Direct communication, referrals from District/County Council, and family members.

3. Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation Measures
Unauthorised access to data	Use of secure passwords, regular audits.
Data breach	Reporting and investigation policy in place.
Loss of physical records	Storage in clerks home, digitisation where possible.

4. Data Disposal Procedures

Type of Data	Disposal Method
Electronic records	Secure deletion from devices and backups.
Physical documents	Shredding and secure disposal.

5. Data Sharing

Third Party	Purpose of Sharing	Data Shared	Consent Mechanism
Borough/County Council	Resolving queries, statutory reporting	Names, contact details (as needed)	Written consent
Bank	Processing payments	Financial details	Consent or contractual
Auditors	Statutory audits	Financial records	Legal requirement

6. Review Schedule

- **Annual Review Date:** January every other year.
 - **Trigger Points for Additional Reviews:** Introduction of new activities, receipt of ICO guidance updates.
-

7. Actions and Recommendations

- Ensure bi-annual review is completed and minuted.
- Provide regular training to councillors and staff on data protection principles.
- Continue maintaining and updating privacy statements and notices as required.

Signed by Locum Clerk to Wormegay Parish Council - *Sharon Sweet*

Wormegay Parish Council

Data Protection Policy

Purpose of the policy

This policy explains to councillors, staff and the public about data protection. Personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently; collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes; be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for processing; be accurate and kept up to date; be kept only for as long as is necessary for processing and be processed in a manner that ensures its security. This policy explains the duties and responsibilities of the council and it identifies the means by which the council will meet its obligations.

Identifying the roles and minimising risk

The General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018 require that everyone within the council must understand the implications of data protection and that roles and duties must be assigned. The Council is the data controller and the Clerk is the data processor. It is the Clerk's duty to undertake an information audit and to manage the information collected by the council, the issuing of privacy statements, dealing with requests and complaints raised and also the safe disposal of information.

Data protection regulations require continued care by everyone within the council, councillors and staff, in the sharing of information about individuals, whether as a hard copy or electronically. A breach of the regulations could result in the council facing a fine from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for the breach itself and also to compensate the individual(s) who could be adversely affected. Therefore, the handling of information is seen as medium risk to the council (both financially and reputationally) and one which is included in the Risk Management Policy of the council. Such risk can be minimised by undertaking an information audit, issuing privacy statements, maintaining privacy impact assessments (an audit of potential data protection risks with new projects), minimising who holds data protected information and the council undertaking training in data protection awareness.

Data breaches

The Clerk will investigate data breaches. Investigations must be undertaken within one month of the report of a breach. Procedures are in place to detect, report and investigate a personal data breach. The ICO will be advised of a breach (within 3 days) where it is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals – if, for example, it could result in discrimination, damage to reputation, financial loss, loss of confidentiality, or any other significant economic or social disadvantage. Where a breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the Clerk will also notify those concerned directly.

It is unacceptable for non-authorized users to access IT using employees' log-in passwords or to use equipment while logged on. It is unacceptable for employees, volunteers and members to use IT in any way that may cause problems for the Council.

Wormegay Parish Council

Privacy Notices

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how the Council uses personal data is a key element of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The most common way to provide this information is in a privacy notice. This is a notice to inform individuals about what a council does with their personal information. A privacy notice will contain the name and contact details of the data controller, the purpose for which the information is to be used and the length of time for its use. It should be written clearly and should advise the individual that they can, at any time, withdraw their agreement for the use of this information (if applicable). Issuing of a privacy notice must be detailed on the Information Audit kept by the council. The council will adopt a privacy notice to use, although some changes could be needed depending on the situation, for example where children are involved. Where consent is being relied on as the lawful basis for processing the data, privacy notices must be verifiable.

Information Audit

The Clerk must undertake an information audit which details the personal data held, where it came from, the purpose for holding that information and with whom the Council will share that information. This will include information held electronically or as a hard copy. Information held could change from year to year with different activities, and so the information audit will be reviewed at least annually or when the council undertakes a new activity. The information audit review should be conducted ahead of the review of this policy and the reviews should be minuted.

Individuals' Rights

GDPR gives individuals rights:

- the right to be informed
- the right of access
- the right to rectification
- the right to erasure
- the right to restrict processing
- right to data portability
- the right to object
- the right not to be subject to automated decision-making incl. profiling.

If a request is received to delete information, then the Clerk must respond to this request within a month. The Clerk has the delegated authority from the Council to delete information.

If a request is considered to be manifestly unfounded then the request could be refused or a charge may apply. Full council will be informed of such requests and will determine the charge.

Children

There is special protection for the personal data of a child. The age when a child can give their own consent is 13. If the council requires consent from young people under 13, the council must obtain a parent or guardian's consent in order to process the

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personal data lawfully. Consent forms for children aged 13 plus, must be written in language that they will understand.

Summary

The main actions arising from this policy are:

- The Council must be registered with the ICO.
- A copy of this policy will be available on the Council's website.
- An information audit will be conducted and reviewed at least annually or when projects and services change.
- Privacy notices must be issued.
- Data Protection is included on the Council's Risk Management Policy.

This policy document is written with current information and advice. It will be reviewed regularly or when further advice is issued by the ICO.

All employees, volunteers and councillors are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect privacy, confidentiality and the interests of the Council.

Draft Jan 2025

Wormegay Parish Council

Retention of Documents Policy

SR – Statutory Requirement, AR – Audit Requirement, BP – Best Practice

Document	Minimum retention period	Explanation
Minute Books (SR)	Indefinite	Archive (NRO), Electronic copy (Clerk), Website (at least 2 years)
Accounts, Annual Governance and Accountability Return, (SR/AR)	Indefinite	Hard Copy Archive (NRO), Electronic copy (Clerk), Website (at least 5 years)
Receipt records (SR)	7 years	VAT
Bank statements (AR)	7 years	Audit and management
Bank paying-in books (AR/SR)	7 years	Audit and management
Cheque book stubs (AR/SR)	7 years	Audit and management
Quotations and tenders (AR/SR)	12 years	Statute of Limitations
Invoices / Records (AR/SR)	7 years	VAT
Timesheets (AR), Payroll / (SR) Sickness / Holiday record (BP)	Last completed audit year	Audit, personnel
Tax Codes (AR)	7 years	Audit, HMRC
Written Statement of Particulars (SR)	During Employment Further 12 months	Model document available
Job Description (SR)	During Employment Further 12 months	Model document available
Completed Job Application forms (BP)	6 months advisory	Post interview queries
Wages books (SR/AR)	12 years	Superannuation
Burial records	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977
Insurance policies (AR) Employers Liability Certificates (SR/AR)	While valid 40 years	Audit and management
Property title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts (SR/AR)	Indefinite	Audit and management

Draft: Jan 2025

Wormegay Parish Council

Privacy Statement

Background

This privacy statement lets you know what happens to any personal data that you give to us, or any that we may collect from or about you. Personal data is personal information such as name, address, email address, phone number etc. Your personal data may be processed and stored to enable us to contact you and respond to your correspondence, provide information and/or access our facilities and services.

Source of your Personal Data

We collect data from the following sources:

- You directly
- Your family members
- Other authorities (where you have raised a query and it has been passed on)

Data Protection Principles

We will comply with data protection law. This says that personal data we hold about you must be:

- Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- Kept for no longer than is necessary
- Kept secure.

Legal Basis for Processing your Personal Data

The General Data Protection Regulation – Article 6 sets out the legal basis for processing data. We will rely on one of the following four (sometimes more than one will apply):

- Processing is with consent of the data subject
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract
- Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller

Sharing your data

The Council may share your personal data with the following third parties:

- The District or County Council – so that we can resolve your query or problem (we will seek your permission first)
- Our bank – for making payments to you

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- Our auditors
- Other organisations and business who provide services to us such as back-up and email hosting providers, IT software and maintenance providers, document storage providers and suppliers of other back office functions.

We have carefully selected these third parties to ensure they understand their obligation to put in place appropriate security measures and they will be responsible to you directly for the manner in which they process and protect your personal data.

Children

We will not process any data relating to a child (12 and under) without the express parental/ guardian consent of the child concerned.

Sensitive Data

In limited circumstances, we may approach you for your written consent to allow us to process certain sensitive personal data. If we do so, we will provide you with full details of the personal data what we would like and the reason we need it, so that you can carefully consider whether you wish to consent.

Your Rights

Here is a list of the rights that all individuals have under data protection laws. They don't apply in all circumstances. If you wish to use any of them, we'll explain at that time if they are appropriate or not.

- The right to be **informed** about the processing of your personal information
- The right to have your personal information **corrected if it is inaccurate** and to have **incomplete personal information completed**
- The right to **object** to processing of your personal information
- The **right to restrict processing** of your personal information
- The **right to have your personal information erased** (the "right to be forgotten")
- The right to **request access** to your personal information and to obtain information about how we process it
- The right to **move, copy or transfer your personal information** ("data portability")

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact us using the details below.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office which enforces data protection laws: casework@ico.org.uk Tel: 0303 123 1113

Wormegay Parish Council

Conclusion

In accordance with the law, we only collect a limited amount of information about you that is necessary for correspondence, information and service provision. We do not use profiling; we do not sell or pass your data to third parties. We do not use your data for purposes other than those specified. We make sure your data is stored securely. We delete all information deemed to be no longer necessary. We may update this page from time to time to reflect changes in the law and/or our privacy practices.

Contact Us

Wormegay Parish Council

Email address clerkwormegaypc@gmail.com

Draft Jan 2025

Wormegay Parish Council

The Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

The Information Commissioner updated its model publication scheme in 2014.

As well as responding to requests for information, you must publish information proactively. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

The scheme must set out your commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information.

To help you do this the ICO has developed a model publication scheme. The information you release in accordance with the publication scheme represents the minimum you must disclose. If a member of the public wants information not listed in the scheme, they can still ask you for it. Most public authorities will make their publication scheme available on their website under 'freedom of information', 'guide to information' or 'publication scheme'.

Any publication scheme you have that was created before 1 January 2009 is now out of date and you should replace it with the ICO model scheme issued in 2014.

What is the model publication scheme? The model publication scheme consists of seven commitments and seven classes of information. The model publication scheme commits you to publish certain classes of information. It also specifies how you should make the information available, what you can charge, and what you need to tell members of the public about the scheme.

- ✓ To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- ✓ To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- ✓ To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

Wormegay Parish Council

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means. In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Wormegay Parish Council

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- ✓ photocopying
- ✓ postage and packaging
- ✓ the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Act covers all recorded information held by a public authority. It is not limited to official documents and it covers, for example, drafts, emails, notes, recordings of telephone conversations and CCTV recordings.

Wormegay Parish Council

Guide to Information

Published Under the Model Publication Scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<p>Class1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>This will be current information only.</p>		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	website	
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	website	
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Clerk's home. Meetings in the Mission Room	
Staffing structure	Clerk is the sole employee	
<p>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p> <p>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</p>		
Annual return form and report by auditor	website	
Finalised budget	website	
Precept	website	
Borrowing Approval letter	n/a	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	website	

Wormegay Parish Council

Grants given and received	Contained within minutes published on the website	
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Contained within minutes published on the website	
Members' allowances and expenses	n/a	
<p>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)</p> <p>Current and previous year as a minimum</p>		
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	n/a	
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	website – Annual Parish Meeting minutes	
Quality status	n/a	
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	n/a	
<p>Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)</p> <p>Current and previous council year as a minimum</p>		
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/subcommittee meetings and parish meetings)	website and noticeboard	
Agendas of meetings (as above)	website and noticeboards	
Minutes of meetings (as above)	website	
Reports presented to council meetings – n.b. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	website	
Responses to consultation papers	Contained within minutes on website	
Responses to planning applications	Contained within minutes on website and on KL&WN planning portal	

Wormegay Parish Council

Bye-laws	n/a	
<p>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Delegated authority in respect of officers Code of Conduct Policy statements	website website website website website website	
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services Equality and diversity policy Health and safety policy Recruitment policies (including current vacancies) Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	n/a website website n/a n/a website	
Information security policy	website	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	website	
Data protection policies	website	
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	website	
<p>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</p> <p>Currently maintained lists and registers only</p>		
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	n/a	
Assets register	website	

Wormegay Parish Council

Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils)	n/a	
Register of members' interests	Website, link to BCKL&WN	
Register of gifts and hospitality	n/a	
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only		
Allotments	n/a	
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Burial records with churchwarden	
Community centres and village halls	n/a	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	n/a	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Website (asset register) and minutes	
Bus shelters	Website (asset register) and minutes	
Markets	n/a	
Public conveniences	n/a	
Agency agreements	n/a	
Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	n/a	

Draft: Jan 2025

Wormegay Parish Council

GRANTS AND DONATIONS POLICY

Draft Jan 2025

Introduction and Criteria

Wormegay Parish Council allocates funds for both grants and donations to causes that provide a clear benefit to our parishioners. This policy outlines the guidelines for the Parish Council when considering funding requests, distinguishing between grants and donations.

Definitions

A grant is awarded for a particular defined purpose, while a donation is awarded for general purposes. Both grants and donations are awarded exclusively for local Parish activities within Wormegay Parish.

Criteria for Grant and Donation Consideration

The Parish Council awards grants to organisations for specific purposes that directly benefit the Parish or its residents, aligning with at least one of the following criteria:

1. Providing a service within Wormegay.
2. Enhancing the quality of life within Wormegay.
3. Improving recreational and sports activities in Wormegay.
4. Enhancing the environmental aspects of Wormegay.
5. Promoting a positive image of the Parish of Wormegay.

In contrast, donations are awarded to causes that may not have a specific project or purpose but contribute positively to the community. The Wormegay Parish Council gives priority consideration to donation requests that actively promote community engagement, support initiatives aimed at enhancing biodiversity, and contribute to the overall health and well-being of our parishioners. All grants and donations must be requested by properly constituted groups; the Parish Council cannot consider applications for assistance from individuals.

Policy Guidelines

1. The Parish Council will only consider grant requests if budgeted resources are available once standard Parish Council expenses have been allocated. Ongoing commitments for future grants will not be made.
2. Grant requests will be reviewed annually, typically in November, except in extraordinary circumstances where special needs arise at other times. The annual review ensures consistent appraisal of requests, while donations may be considered throughout the year.
3. Grants cannot be awarded to individuals.
4. Each organisation may submit only one grant application in any given financial year, while multiple donation requests may be considered if they meet the criteria.
5. Grant awards are made at the absolute discretion of the Parish Council, while donations may be approved based on their positive impact on the community.
6. A granted amount must be used exclusively for the purpose stated in the application. If the organisation cannot utilise the funds, or a portion thereof, for the specified purpose, all unspent funds must be returned to the Parish Council. Proof of expenditure is required.

Application Procedure

Organisations seeking grants or donations from the Parish Council must follow these steps:

1. For grants, complete the Parish Council's official grant application form (see appendix 1) and return it to the Clerk no later than 10 days before the next meeting. For donations, provide a written request detailing how the donation will benefit the community.
2. For grants include a copy of your organisation's annual accounts and, if available, an equality policy.

Appendix 1:

Note: All decisions made by the Parish Council regarding grant and donation applications are final, and there is no right of appeal. The Parish Council reserves the right to decline any application without providing reasons for its decision.

WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL

APPLICATION FOR GRANT AID

Name of organisation and status (charity, trust etc) :

Contact details :

In what ways does your organisation benefit people in Wormegay?

Amount requested?

What will this money be used for?

Please indicate specific expenses that the grant will be used to cover and how it meets our criteria. Please do not state 'general maintenance', or 'for funds'. How much money do you need to raise overall? How much have you raised already? What other sources of funding have you applied for? Continue overleaf if necessary.

By signing below we agree to feedback within six months on how the grant has helped the organisation, to allow the Parish Council to monitor the effectiveness of its grants on its parishioners. At this time evidence of the expenditure must also be provided.

Applicant's signature on behalf of the group :

For Parish Council Use

Decision by PC:

Any conditions to be placed when making donation :

Internal Control Policy

Scope of Responsibility

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 state that a Council shall be responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Wormegay Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

Internal control is designed to reduce financial risk to the Council and ensure that its activities are carried out properly and as intended. The system of internal control is established by the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), but it is the responsibility of the Council members to have a degree of oversight and understanding of those controls. These controls will include the checking of routine financial procedures, examination of financial comparisons, recording of assets and liabilities, and identification of risks. The likelihood and impact of those risks will also be evaluated, and efforts will be made to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

Internal Controls Checklist (Appendix A)

One member of the Council, appointed by the Council and who is not a bank account signatory, will use the internal controls checklist (Appendix A) to review the Council's internal controls **twice yearly**. This member will report their findings to the Council via an agenda item at a Council meeting.

Statement of Internal Controls

Cash Book / Bank Reconciliations	The cash book is kept electronically (in spreadsheet format) and maintained up to date from original documents. The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement at least monthly. The cash book, payments and receipts and bank reconciliation are reviewed and approved by a nominated member of the Parish Council at least quarterly. The Councillor is nominated annually at the May meeting of the Council, for a maximum of a year and must not be a bank signatory.
Financial Regulations	The Parish Council has adopted financial regulations; the regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary.

Order/Tender Controls	<p>The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work.</p> <p>Official orders/letters are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature.</p>
Payment Controls	<p>Payments are listed in payment order in the cash book and in accounts files.</p> <p>All invoices for payment are listed on the meeting agenda where the expenditure is to be authorised for payment.</p> <p>Payments made are listed in the minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>Original invoices are available to the Councillors authorising the payments.</p> <p>Payment will be authorised by two councillors, who are authorised to do so on the Council's bank mandate.</p> <p>Councillors, when authorising payments, will ensure that there is an invoice or other documentation that corresponds with the payment and that the payment is listed on the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO is authorised to transfer funds from one account to another, but not to make third party payments outside of the bank accounts in any form.</p> <p>The RFO maintains control of the cheque book at all times, cheques will only be issued and signed for payments approved in Council meetings and the RFO is not a signatory to the bank accounts.</p> <p>When invoices are paid, they are identified by the cheque number or payment date and referenced in the cashbook.</p>
VAT repayment claims	<p>The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council.</p> <p>The RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable.</p> <p>The RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year.</p>
Income Controls	<p>The RFO ensures that the amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the District Council.</p> <p>The RFO ensures that other receipts are received when due.</p> <p>The RFO ensures that income is banked promptly.</p>
Financial Reporting	<p>A budget control, comparing actual receipts and payments to the budget is prepared on at least a quarterly basis, presented to the Parish Council in advance of the meeting and minuted as such.</p>
Budgetary Controls	<p>The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council, as evidenced by reports and minutes in advance of the start of the year.</p> <p>The precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the District Council.</p>
Payroll controls	<p>The Clerk is paid under PAYE as an employee and the necessary system of HMRC RTI is in place.</p> <p>The Clerk's salary is set by the Council and minuted as such.</p>

	The RFO will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.
Clerk's Expenses	The Clerk submits a request for reimbursement of monies owing in advance of each meeting.
Asset Control	The RFO maintains a full asset register. The existence and condition of assets are checked on an annual basis. The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.
Auditing	The RFO ensures that the accounts are audited in line with practice laid down in 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils'. The Council will nominate and agree the work to be undertaken by the Internal Auditor annually. The accounts will be audited at the year end. The Councillor responsible for carrying out the quarterly accounts check will also be responsible for making contact with the Internal Auditor to ensure that the Audit has been carried out and that the report received by the Council is genuine and has not been altered.

Draft Jan 2025

Appendix A: Internal Controls Checklist

1. Accounting Records

- Is the cash book up to date and cross-checked with bank statements?
- Is the monthly bank reconciliation completed and reviewed?

2. Payments and Invoices

- Are all payments authorised and supported by invoices?
- Do payments match the invoices and are they listed in the meeting minutes?

3. Income

- Is income collected promptly and properly recorded?
- Are surplus funds placed in an appropriate account?

4. VAT and Tax Liabilities

- Is VAT recorded and claimed in a timely manner?
- Are tax and NI liabilities submitted correctly to HMRC?

5. Expenditure Controls

- Are cheques properly signed and correspond with invoices?
- Are payments made according to the budget and Financial Regulations?

6. Payroll and Salary

- Is the Clerk's salary paid via PAYE, and are payroll returns made to HMRC?

7. Internal Audit

- Have internal audit findings been reviewed by the council and actions taken?

8. External Audit

- Has the external auditor's report been reviewed, and are any actions being followed?

9. Internet Banking

- Are proper controls in place for internet banking payments and transfers?

10. General Oversight

- Are financial systems regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective?

Name of person carrying out the check:

1. _____

Date check undertaken: _____

Signature:

1. _____

The completed form should be returned to the Clerk for inclusion as an agenda item at the next parish council meeting.

Wormegay Parish Council

Reserves Policy

Introduction

The Council is required, under statute, to maintain adequate financial reserves in order to meet the needs of the organisation.

The Council's policy on the establishment, maintenance and adequacy of reserves and balances will be considered annually.

The Council will hold reserves for these three purposes:

- **General Reserve**

The Joint Panel on Governance and Accountability states the appropriate minimum level of general reserves should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve. A general reserve will include:

- A **working balance** to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows, such as the time lag between the start of the new financial year and the receipt of the first precept payment and the upfront payment of VAT prior to reclaiming
- A **contingency** to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies

- **Earmarked reserves:**

- A means of building up funds, to meet known or predicted requirements
- Money held for specific purposes such as CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)
- Money pledged but payments unmade

- **Capital reserves:**

- Money for capital projects (the purchase of buildings or land)

Notes to the Annual Accounts will detail the movement of reserves during the financial year.

The Council's specific requirements, as recommended at Jan 2025, are detailed in appendix 1

Reviewed Jan 2025
Next review Jan 2026

Appendix 1

Reserves Report

General Reserve

It is recommended that a council of this size maintain a General Reserve equivalent to approximately 12 months' Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE). Based on the draft budget for 2025/26, this is estimated at £10,000, and considering the recommended earmarked reserves outlined below, the council's General Reserve would fall within the advised range.

Earmarked Reserves

It is recommended to earmark the following funds in the accounts under earmarked reserves:

- **Parish CIL (£734.40):** Reserved for new infrastructure projects (must be earmarked).
- **Election Costs (£2,500.00):** To cover potential future election expenses.
- **HR Fund (£2,500.00):** For HR-related costs, including payroll issues, recruitment, and locum clerk cover.
- **Cemetery (£0.00):** Recommended to save burial fees here for long-term maintenance.
- **Asset Maintenance/Repairs (£2,500.00):** For planned or emergency repairs to council assets.

Total Earmarked Reserves: £8,234.40

Summary

- **General Reserve (recommended level):** £10,000 approx
- **Earmarked Reserves:** £8,234.40
- **Total Reserves:** £18,234.40
- **Bank Statement Balance** - The bank statement balance as of 31.10.2024 is **£20,078.97**. However, this has not been reconciled with the cashbook, and there are likely to be uncashed cheques affecting the actual balance. A full reconciliation is recommended to confirm the final figures.

Wormegay General Risk Assessment 2024-25 (reviewed Jan 2025)

Aim	Risk	Method used to minimise risk	Person(s) responsible
<p>1. To ensure compliance with the Acts of Parliament, Council's Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct.</p>	1. Lack of knowledge of regulations and codes.	Ensure that all Councillors have access to copies of relative Acts and receive their own copies of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. All new councillors required to attend new councillor training and refresher courses as needed.	Chairman/ Clerk
	2. Absence of Standing Orders	Ensure that Standing Orders are produced, understood by councillors, and reviewed every four years or as circumstances demand.	Chairman/ Clerk
	3. Actions by the PC outside its powers laid down by Parliament.	As at 1 above, but ensure that powers are highlighted or extracted into effective summary.	Chairman/ Clerk
	4. Lack of adherence to regulations and procedures.	Reference to appropriate regulations as required.	Chairman/ Clerk/All councillors
	5. Items purchased without proper tendering procedures, resulting in accusations of commercial favouritism.	Ensure that all councillors are aware of regulations re estimates and full tender procedures (see Financial Regulations).	RFO/Clerk
	6. Payments made without prior approval and adequate control.	Ensure all payments are approved in Council meetings and recorded in minutes. Keep cash payments to a minimum, and avoid if possible.	RFO/Clerk/ Internal Auditor
	7. Lack of control of signatories to cheques and bank account.	Keep authorised signatories to a minimum consistent with practicalities.	As above plus Chairman
	8. VAT not properly accounted for, resulting in over-claims and large demands from Customs & Excise	Ensure appropriate publications held and that Clerk has good knowledge of regulations.	As above
<p>2. To identify and regularly review the Council's priorities.</p>	1. Lack of knowledge of how to set objectives, set priorities, and identify risks to their achievement.	All councillors to be made aware of need for objectives and identification of risk. Attend training sessions if practicable.	Clerk/ Chairman
	2. No risk analysis carried out.	As at 1 above.	

<p>3. To influence other council authorities and Government organisations to consider the views of the parishioners.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of effective lines of communication with other organisations. 2. Lack of effective lines of communication with parishioners. 3. Lack of preparation on subjects requiring influence. 4. Lack of confidence by Parish Councillors. 	<p>Note all communication lines which are essential or beneficial and make information available to all councillors. Establish contacts by name and where possible face-to-face.</p> <p>Take every opportunity to publicise role of Parish Council. Create Parish newsletter if none exists. Effective use of notice boards and flyers. Use key issues to raise profile of PC and to test parishioners' views. Add social event to occasional meeting. Create Annual PC report and put to parishioners for comment.</p> <p>Ensure that all councillors are aware of need for careful research and are guided as to where to obtain relevant information on issues under discussion.</p> <p>As at 1 above. Experienced councillors to assist newcomers to establish essential contacts. Delegate responsibility for specific contacts to individual councillors.</p>	<p>All councillors/ applicable working group/Clerk</p> <p>All councillors /Clerk</p> <p>Councillors/ Clerk</p> <p>Councillors/ Clerk</p>
<p>4. To ensure that all councillors are aware of their responsibilities, and possible liabilities, and to provide adequate insurance cover for all possible risks.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of possible culpability of councillors. 2. Lack of education of councillors regarding culpability. 3. Inadequate insurance cover taken out – property, personal liability, employer's liability and public liability. 	<p>Refer to Standing Orders and familiarisation with those where greatest risk occurs.</p> <p>As at 1 above. Attend any training courses available, including induction/new councillor training.</p> <p>Review risk assessment by including on agenda of PC meetings on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Councillors</p> <p>Councillors/ Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Councillors</p>
<p>5. To keep appropriate books of account accurately and up-to-date throughout the financial year.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of accounting requirements 2. Lack of commitment to accounting requirements. 3. Bank charges unnecessarily incurred. 	<p>Ensure all councillors are familiar with current financial regulations and include them in Standing Orders/Financial Regulations. Regularly review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</p> <p>As at 1 above. RFO to produce financial reports quarterly. Internal audit reports to be made available to all councillors and any recommendations to be acted upon promptly.</p> <p>RFO to carry out regular inspection of books of account. Internal audit checks to be undertaken periodically during the current financial year.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Audit Control Officer</p>

	4. Inaccuracies in recording amounts, totals in books of account and bank reconciliations.	RFO to ensure books of account are formatted in such a way that internal controls are included and activated. Quarterly internal checks to be carried out and an internal audit annually.	Clerk/RFO/ Internal Audit Control Officer/ Internal Auditor
	5. Inaccuracies and interest losses caused by account transfers.	Keep number of accounts to a minimum; ensure that any large credit balances are deposited in an interest-bearing account.	Clerk/RFO
	6. The most beneficial interest terms not being employed.	Ensure that favourable interest rate is obtained in deposit accounts and review against alternatives, but bearing in mind the risks in changing accounts.	Clerk/RFO with Councillors
	7. Inadequate control of cash receipts and payments. Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty.	Avoid cash payments and receipts if possible. Where cash payments and receipts are unavoidable use a properly controlled petty cash account with a set maximum balance. Ensure Fidelity Guarantee appropriate amount.	Clerk/RFO
	8. Books of account not kept up to date/ invoices not posted promptly.	Regular checks by RFO, Internal Audit Control Officer and Internal Auditor. Financial reports quarterly.	Clerk/RFO
	9. Internal controls not in place or not operated.	As at 8 above.	Clerk/RFO
	10. Payments missed or delayed due to inadequate filing of invoices.	As at 8 above.	Clerk/RFO
	11. Clerk taken ill or leaves without replacement.	Appoint a councillor as RFO to be familiar with all aspects of financial matters or appoint another Clerk on temporary basis until situation resolved. Ensure PC has sufficient funds in reserve to pay for a locum clerk if the Clerk is absent for a significant period.	Clerk/RFO

<p>6. To ensure that payments made from council funds and the use of assets, represent value for money, are adequately managed, and comply generally with the wishes of the residents.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of wishes of residents. 2. Use of funds not giving value for money. 3. Use of funds not in accordance with the wishes of the residents. 4. Charges for use of facilities inadequate (e.g. allotments and cemetery). 	<p>As at 3.2. Ensure residents are consulted on all major financial issues.</p> <p>Effective budget planning processes and creation of annual plan after consultation process.</p> <p>Take into account the views of parishioners.</p> <p>Effective financial management by RFO. Regular reviews undertaken.</p>	<p>Councillors/ Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Councillors/ Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Councillors/ Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO</p>
<p>7. To ensure that the annual precept requirement results from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget is regularly monitored; and reserves are appropriate.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of budgetary process, and Council regulations. 2. Lack of commitment to budgetary process. 3. Inadequate consideration of requirements for annual precept. 4. Calculation not in accordance with Council regulations. 5. Inadequate internal controls with regard to monitoring expenditure. 6. Reserves inappropriate. 	<p>Include regulations in Standing Orders issued to all councillors. Delegate responsibility for managing budgetary process.</p> <p>As at 1 above. Involve all councillors in budgetary process.</p> <p>Place item on agenda early in Autumn to remind councillors of budget process and actions required. Delegate responsibility for managing budgetary process. Start consideration of calculation at least two months prior to submission date. Create annual and 2-3 year plans to assist in process.</p> <p>Checks to be carried out regularly.</p> <p>Checks to be carried out regularly. Financial and budget progress reports given quarterly.</p> <p>As at 5 above.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO/ Finance Working Group Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Finance Working Group</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Auditor</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Auditor</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Auditor</p>
<p>8. To explore all possible sources of income, and to ensure that expected income is fully received.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of possible sources of income e.g. grants. 2. Lack of commitment to pursue possible sources of income. 	<p>Seek advice, as appropriate, on grants available.</p> <p>As at 1 above.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/ Councillors</p>

	<p>3. Receipts not banked or not banked promptly.</p> <p>4. Debts not pursued promptly.</p> <p>5. VAT claims not made promptly or made incorrectly.</p>	<p>Regular checks carried out. Internal audit checks.</p> <p>As at 3 above.</p> <p>Ensure RFO keeps up-to-date with regulations. Regular checks carried out.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Audit Control Officer/ Internal Auditor</p> <p>As above</p>
<p>9. To ensure that salaries paid to employees and amounts paid to contractors are paid in accordance with council regulations, and adequately monitored.</p>	<p>1. Inappropriate rate of pay to employees.</p> <p>2. Tax and NI arrangements not in accordance with regulations.</p> <p>3. Amounts paid to contractors not in accordance with contract and inadequately monitored.</p>	<p>Ensure employee regulations are available and understood by Clerk. Internal audit checks.</p> <p>As at 1 above.</p> <p>Internal audit checks. Councillor to monitor contract work carried out, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO/ Councillors/ Internal Audit Control Officer/ Internal Auditor</p> <p>As above</p>
<p>10. To ensure that year end accounts are prepared on the correct accounting basis, on time, and supported by an adequate audit trail.</p>	<p>1. Lack of knowledge of Council regulations and procedures.</p> <p>2. Late or non-submission of annual accounts.</p> <p>3. Year-end accounts not prepared, inaccurate, or not in accordance with Council requirements.</p> <p>4. Inadequate audit trail from records to final accounts.</p>	<p>Refer to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Attend training seminars where available.</p> <p>Refer to Audit Plan. Monitor progress against timetable and report to PC meetings.</p> <p>Internal audit checks.</p> <p>As at 3 above.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO/ Councillors</p> <p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Audit Control Officer/ Internal Auditor As above</p>
<p>11. To identify, value, and maintain all the assets of the Parish Council, and ensure that asset and investment registers are complete, accurate and properly maintained.</p>	<p>1. Lack of knowledge of assets of Parish Council.</p> <p>2. Assets lost or misappropriated.</p> <p>3. Inadequate or inaccurate valuation of the Council's assets.</p>	<p>Ascertain and record all assets for which Parish Council is responsible. Maintain Asset Register.</p> <p>Establish who is responsible for security and maintenance of each asset. A map of the location of fixed assets should be held and regularly updated along with a list of the names of those holding mobile assets.</p> <p>Arrange for periodic review of valuations and arrange for professional valuation where necessary. Internal audit checks.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Internal Auditor</p>

	<p>4. Asset Register not established or inadequately maintained.</p> <p>5. Damage to third party property or individuals as a result of Council providing services or amenities to the public.</p>	<p>Asset Register regularly checked for accuracy.</p> <p>Public liability insurance held (minimum of £5 million) and reviewed annually. Regular checks on assets carried out.</p>	<p>Clerk/RFO</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Councillors</p>
<p>12. To comply with appropriate Government legislation regarding disability, racial equality, safeguarding children etc.</p>	<p>1. Lack of knowledge of applicable legislation.</p> <p>2. Failure to comply with applicable legislation.</p>	<p>Clerk to know where to go for advice and training. Review liabilities and responsibilities periodically at PC meetings. A councillor has been appointed as safeguarding officer. Ensure contractors have a safeguarding policy prior to working in areas where they might be children playing.</p> <p>As at 1 above.</p>	<p>Clerk/ Councillors</p> <p>Clerk/ Councillors</p>
<p>13. To carry out adequate safety checks on all buildings, properties, land and equipment for which the council is responsible.</p>	<p>1. Lack of information on land, buildings and equipment.</p> <p>2. Lack of knowledge of safety requirements.</p> <p>3. Lack of commitment to carrying out safety checks.</p>	<p>Include in Asset Register all assets for which PC is responsible. Ensure that electrical items are PAT tested.</p> <p>Ensure that all current legislation is complied with.</p> <p>As at 2 above. Delegate responsibility for checking properties/equipment/land to individual councillors or working groups. Checks on all areas looked after by the Parish Council will be at least annually.</p>	<p>Clerk/ Councillors</p> <p>Clerk/ Councillors</p> <p>Clerk/ Councillors</p>
<p>14. To ensure IT security for Clerk/RFO.</p>	<p>1. Inadequate safeguards to prevent viruses and other intrusions damaging Council documents.</p> <p>2. Loss of data.</p> <p>3. Inappropriate copying/use of data.</p>	<p>Ensure regular virus protection on Clerk's laptop or computer.</p> <p>Ensure Council documents are backed-up to cloud storage and password protected.</p> <p>Comply with rules of Data Protection (see 16).</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/RFO/ Councillors</p>

<p>15. To ensure the safety of public at meetings and events organised by the PC.</p>	<p>1. If someone is taken ill.</p> <p>2. If someone trips or slips.</p> <p>3. If someone is electrocuted.</p> <p>4. Fire breaks out.</p> <p>5. General.</p>	<p>First aider is in attendance at significant events organised by the PC. Use a mobile phone at PC meetings/public meetings in event of emergency to call emergency services.</p> <p>As 1 above plus visual check of furniture and equipment.</p> <p>As 1 above plus ensure all wires etc are secured safely. Ensure the PC has public liability insurance.</p> <p>For indoor events, ensure fire exits are clearly marked and free from obstruction.</p> <p>Ensure that risk assessments are carried out prior to the event, advise insurer of the event, and organise additional insurance cover, if appropriate.</p>	<p>Clerk/Event organisers</p> <p>Clerk/Event organisers</p> <p>Clerk/Event organisers</p> <p>Clerk/Event organisers</p> <p>Clerk/Event organisers</p>
<p>16. To ensure the PC is adhering to data protection law.</p>	<p>1. PC fails to adhere to data protection rules – complaints received due to a data protection breach/complaints to the Information Commissioner’s Office.</p>	<p>Data Protection Officer (DPO) appointed.</p> <p>Clerk and councillors trained in data protection.</p> <p>Data Protection Working Group set up (with terms of reference) to monitor work of DPO, ensuring the council’s role as Data Protection Controller is carried out correctly.</p> <p>Data protection policy adopted and information audit regularly reviewed.</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Clerk & councillors</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Clerk & Council</p>
<p>17. To ensure that any contractors used by the PC are aware of own liability.</p>	<p>1. Contractor has an accident whilst working for the PC and does not have insurance.</p>	<p>Contractor to be given a clear brief of work to be carried and required to have own public liability insurance (and seen prior to work carried out).</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>18. To ensure the safe, legal, and efficient operation of the cemetery, in compliance with the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO), and to maintain public safety and proper records.</p>	<p>1. Poor cemetery management, unsafe memorials, inadequate funding, and failure to comply with LACO 1977</p>	<p>Conduct safety inspections (health & safety and memorial), maintain up-to-date records, ensure compliance with LACO 1977, and maintain sufficient funding for future maintenance. Regularly review cemetery fees and regulations. Membership of ICCM.</p>	<p>Clerk / Councillors / RFO</p>

Wormegay Parish Council

Complaints Policy

If you have a complaint (or a compliment) about the Council, we would like to hear from you. This notice tells you how to complain, and what happens to your complaint on receipt. It also tells you who deals with the complaint, how you can be represented, when a decision is made and how you will be notified of this.

Feedback from our residents, whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again, and
- to encourage good practice

How to contact us with your compliment or complaint

You can contact the Council by telephone, in writing, or over the internet. A form is included with this policy which you can fill in and send back to us. This policy explains the procedure which will be followed once your complaint has been received. A list of contact details is also included on this leaflet.

What we will do when we hear from you

We will deal with any comments about the Council as quickly as possible. We will investigate the complaint fully. We may be able to give you an answer straight away, or we may need more time to investigate what you have told us. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer.

Your complaint will in the first instance be investigated by an officer of the council. If you remain dissatisfied, then your complaint will be dealt with by a Committee of the council. If you have a complaint, we hope we will be able to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure it won't happen again.

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints procedure. Below are examples of complaints which will require special consideration and where we may engage other procedures or bodies. If this is the case, then we will advise you of this.

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	External Auditor
Criminal activity	The Police
Member conduct	Monitoring Officer xxx District/Borough Council
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure
Data Protection Breach	Information Commissioner's Officer

Persistent complaints

We will do our best to answer your complaint within the terms detailed in this policy. In the unfortunate circumstance where we answer a complaint fully, but further correspondence is received on that matter one acknowledgement only will be issued.

Confidentiality

We will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand (e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned). Details will only be given to those councillors/members of staff directly concerned.

Procedure

The following procedure has been approved by Wormegay Parish Council as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that, at the very least, their complaint has been properly and fully considered.

Informal Complaint

The Council envisages that most complaints can be resolved easily and amicably through this route. Complaints must be direct to the Clerk, or Chairman if the complaint is about the Clerk. A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not able to resolve complaints. The Parish Clerk (or Chairman) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next Parish Council meeting.

If an informal approach does not resolve the issue, or the complaint is deemed particularly serious, the formal complaints procedure outlined below should be followed.

Formal Complaint

If a complaint about the Council is notified orally to the Clerk or Chairman and the complaint is unresolved, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk on the form provided. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 15 working days.

The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will, within 15 days, provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed. The Clerk will report to the Council at the next meeting.

If the complaint remains unresolved, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the matter will be referred to the Complaints Panel of the Council.

Complaints Panel

When necessary, the Council will appoint a Complaints Panel to fully investigate the complaint. The Panel will be constituted of all members of the Council to ensure that three members are available, one of which will be the Chairman. The Panel has delegated authority from the Parish Council to review and decide on complaints. A letter will be sent to the complainant with the date of the Panel Meeting. It is expected that the panel will meet within 15 working days of being notified by the Clerk. If the Panel is unable to meet within this time, all parties will be notified of the date of the meeting and the reason for the delay.

The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time of the meeting.

At the Meeting

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant exclusion of the public and the press.

The Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk or other nominated officer and members.

The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and members.

The Clerk and then the complainant shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their positions.

If the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day the complainant shall be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

The decision will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days together with details of any action to be taken.

The announcement of any decision will be made in public at the next Council meeting.

Draft Jan 2025

Formal Complaint Form – Wormegay Parish Council

Complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. Please refer to the accompanying procedure before completing this form.

Your name (block capitals please):

Address:

Email address:

Telephone number (day): (evening): When is the best time for us to contact you?
Please give details of your complaint here (if necessary continue over the page):

Have you spoken with, emailed or written to anyone at the Council? Yes/No If yes please give their name:

What happened as a result of this contact?

What outcome are you looking for, i.e. what would be the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint?

Please return this form to the Parish Clerk



NORFOLK PARISH TRAINING & SUPPORT

Complying with the Biodiversity Duty

Introduction

The word biodiversity comes from the word's biological diversity – it means the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi.

The State of Nature Report 2023 which is the most comprehensive report on UK wildlife has found one in six of the more than ten thousand species assessed (16%) are at risk of being lost from Great Britain. However, this figure is much higher for some groups such as birds (43%), amphibians and reptiles (31%), fungi and lichen (28%) and terrestrial mammals (26%)¹.

Legislation

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, every public body, including Parish Councils, already has a duty to conserve biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2021 has strengthened this so those public bodies including Parish Councils in England must now consider what they can do to **conserve and enhance biodiversity**. This is the strengthened '**biodiversity duty**' that the Environment Act 2021 introduces.

What must you do:

1. Consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
3. Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives.

To comply complete your first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. You must agree your policies and objectives as soon as possible after this.

You must reconsider the actions you can take within 5 years of when you complete your previous consideration.

Actions to Comply

1. *Include an item on your next Parish Council agenda*

Biodiversity Duty for [insert the name of your Parish Council] –

If your parish council manages areas of land including commons, playing fields, allotments, churchyards, rivers, streams, ponds, grass verges or just a tree in a village square it will be home to an abundance of life including potentially rare plants or a site for breeding birds.

At the meeting introduce the subject of the biodiversity duty, talk, and note what is already being done in the parish. Start thinking about what small steps can be taken to enhance areas for wildlife. Perhaps contribute towards the many national campaigns helping to protect

¹ (State of Nature Partnership, 2023)

wildlife, engage with local wildlife groups who might have enthusiastic volunteers willing to offer support, review grass cutting regimes to create some areas for wildlife.

As a first step agree that in future the Council will include any concerns about potential loss of biodiversity when making comments on planning applications. There is a legal duty that developments deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

2. *Agree a Policy*

A draft policy for your Parish Council to consider and adopt is appended to this briefing paper. There is no need to do this at your next meeting, take time to think about the actions to be taken and agree them as part of the agreed policy.

3. *Review agreed actions*

Within five years or sooner if it is considered appropriate the Parish Council will need to review its agreed actions and determine whether they have been achieved, or hopefully exceeded.

Wormegay Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

Legislation

In accordance with the Duty imposed by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended by the Section 102 Environment Act 2021, Wormegay Parish Council will in exercising all its functions, actively consider how it can conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity comes from the words biological diversity and is the variety of life on earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi and the natural systems that support them.

Aim

Through its work Wormegay Parish Council will aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity contributing to the achievement of national goals and targets on biodiversity¹ developing an agreed Action Plan for the parish.

The Council will:

- manage its land and buildings to enhance and improve biodiversity through best practices engaging with grounds maintenance contractors and volunteers to:
 - ✓ plant indigenous trees and wildflowers;
 - ✓ reduce mowing to create a mosaic of new habitats that benefit wildlife;
 - ✓ enhance water bodies including village ponds/streams with marginal planting;
 - ✓ install bird/bat boxes and creating hedgehog friendly gardens;
 - ✓ reduce reliance on pesticides and herbicides.
- include policies to conserve and enhance biodiversity within its Neighbourhood Plan through:
 - ✓ mapping areas of biodiversity and introducing policies to enhance greenspace in the parish;
 - ✓ introduce policies to protect significant private greenspaces in the parish.
- consider the impact on biodiversity when commenting on planning applications ensuring where it is appropriate that there is a net gain in overall biodiversity:
 - ✓ support good design that helps improve the local environment integrating existing habitats and trees within new developments;
 - ✓ support development that increases overall biodiversity.
- educate, advise and raise awareness of the public's understanding of biodiversity and encourage them to improve biodiversity
 - ✓ engage with the local community to raise awareness of biodiversity through newsletters and website;
 - ✓ actively involve the community in projects to enhance biodiversity, through projects including tree planting and installing bird/bat boxes;

¹ [environmental-improvement-plan-2023](#)

- ✓ seek out local enthusiasts/experts to help monitor biodiversity including undertaking surveys for birds, mammals and reptiles.
- encourage landowners and businesses to improve biodiversity
 - ✓ engage with landowners and businesses to promote the importance of biodiversity, where possible creating green corridors that benefit wildlife.

Review

Within 5 years, or before if appropriate, the Council will review and update its agreed Action Plan.

Draft Jan 2025

**WORMEGAY PARISH COUNCIL
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

The Council will manage its land and buildings to enhance and improve biodiversity through best practices engaging with grounds maintenance contractors and volunteers to:

Desired Outcome	Actions	Target Date	How to publicise
plant indigenous trees and wildflowers;			
reduce mowing to create a mosaic of new habitats that benefit wildlife;			
enhance water bodies including village ponds/streams with marginal planting;			
install bird/bat boxes and creating hedgehog friendly gardens;			
reduce reliance on pesticides and herbicides.			