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Parish Council Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Parish Council meeting will take place at Pitchford Village Hall on Tuesday **17 January 2023** commencing **7.30pm** and Members are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of transacting the following business.



Signed:
Sharon Clayton MPA, BA (Hons), FSLCC
Locum Clerk

Date of issue: 10 January 2023

A G E N D A

FILMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018

Any person present at a Council meeting may not orally report or comment about a Council meeting as it takes place but otherwise may; film photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting; use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting, or orally report or comment after the meeting. Anyone making a recording for non-domestic purposes is advised to seek advice on their obligations to ensure any processing of personal information complies with the Data Protection Act.

Anyone who objects to being filmed or recorded should notify the Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1. **Chairman's Welcome**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests, Bias and Pre-determination**

In accordance with Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 Members are personally responsible for deciding whether they should disclose an interest at this meeting. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to a Member's Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion nor vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', Members do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that they have an interest. (Please refer to the Council's Code of Conduct).

Members are also reminded they should not make decisions with a closed mind and must declare a bias and not vote on matters where their decision could be pre-determined.

4. **Public Session**
5. **Minutes**

To consider and approve the minutes from a Parish Council meeting held on 8 November 2022 (appendix 5)

6. **Police Report**
7. **Shropshire Councillor Report**

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

8. Clerk's Report – (appendix 8)

9. Finance

- a. To consider and approve payments to date (appendix 9a)
- b. To consider and approve bank reconciliations to date (appendix 9b)
- c. To consider and approve income and expenditure to date (appendix 10)

10. Budget and Precept 2023/2024

To consider and approve the budget and precept for 2023/2024 (appendix 10)

11. Community Event

To consider and approve whether the Parish Council should facilitate a community event later this year (funded from Lightsource funds)

12. Defibrillators

To consider and approve retrospectively the purchase of 3 new defibrillators and accessories (appendix 12)

13. Civility and Respect

To consider and approve signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge (appendix 13)

14. General Power of Competence

In pursuance of the Localism Act 2011, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1, to consider and approve that, as the Parish Council meets the required criteria of at least two-thirds of its Members being elected and the Clerk has the required qualification (CiLCA), the Parish Council exercises the general power of competence in accordance with the (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012

15. Planning Applications for Consideration

To consider and approve a response to the following:

Application number	Details
23/00073/AGR Oaklands Farm, Pitchford, Condover	Proposed agricultural reservoir

16. Planning Applications already Considered – TO NOTE

Application number	Details
None received	

17. Planning Decisions – TO NOTE

Application number	Details
22/04668/FUL & 22/04669/LBC 1 Frodesley House Farm Barns, Frodesley, Shrewsbury	Conversion of one bay of double garage to form utility room Permission GRANTED 19 December 2022

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

18. Consultation

To consider and approve a response to:

- a. the Boundary Review – further information available at:
<http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk/> and <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/>
- b. Shropshire Council's Budget 2023/2024 – further information at:
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/budget-consultation-202324/>
- c. Shropshire Council's draft Sustainable Warmth Strategy

19. Traffic Calming

To receive an update on traffic calming

20. Footpath

To receive an update on a footpath from Acton Burnell to Pitchford

21. Jubilee Tree Planting

To receive an update on Jubilee planting

22. Parish Matters

To consider any parish matters and approve any action required

23. Next Meeting

To NOTE the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 14 March 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act and due to the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted it will be PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the public and press should not be present

24. Staffing

- a. To receive an update on staffing matters from the Chairman of the Staff Recruitment Committee
- b. To consider and approve the appointment of an RFO in accordance with the LGA 1972, Section 151

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

Minutes

of a Parish Council meeting
7.30 pm Tuesday 8 November 2022
At Pitchford Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Carmen Culliss (Chairman), Cllr. Gareth Ball, Cllr. Graham Davies, Cllr. Alan Hotchkiss, Cllr. Robert Morgan, Cllr. Tracy Johnson, Cllr. John Long.

In attendance.

Sharon Clayton, Locum Clerk
Shropshire Councillor Dan Morris
One member of the public

22.11.1. Chairman's Welcome

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, Cllr. Carmen Culliss chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present.

22.11.2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Paul Harrison and Cllr. Keith Faulkner

22.11.3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests, Bias and Pre-determination

In accordance with Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 Members were informed they are personally responsible for deciding whether they should disclose an interest at this meeting. Members were also reminded they should not make decisions with a closed mind and must declare a bias and not vote on matters where their decision could be pre-determined.

Cllr. Robert Morgan declared an interest concerning the planning application that a member of the public wished inform the Parish Council about.

22.11.4. Public Session

One member of the public was in attendance concerning a planning application he was intending to submit to Shropshire Council and responded to questions from councillors after which he left the meeting

22.11.5. Minutes

The minutes from a Parish Council meeting held on 8 November 2022 were considered for approval.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the minutes be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record.

22.11.6. Police Report

There was no report from the police.

22.11.7. Shropshire Councillor Report

Shropshire Councillor Dan Morris provided a verbal report as follows:

- Shrewsbury quarry pool had been closed due to repairs needed to the roof and, although funding had been secured for the necessary repairs, remedial work was not due to take place until next year.
- Car parking charges had been increased across the county.
- Bin collection days were due to change in some areas and residents could check online when their collection was due.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

- Shropshire Council had launched the ‘Keep Shropshire Warm’ initiative for which residents could call a free phone number or email for advice about energy efficient grants although the grants would be means tested.
- Problems with the culvert at Frodesley bridge were still ongoing but funding for remedial work would be included in the 2023/2024 budget.
- The mirror requested for installation at Frodesley was still awaited and its delay was due to a shortage of staff. Shropshire Council was trying to recruit and fill the vacancies.
- There had been quite a lot of crime in Condover and, due to similar concerns, a What’s App group had been set up in the Wilderley and Pulverbatch area so that information could be shared. A meeting was to take place that would be attended by the police and people who had been affected by the recent criminal activity. Smart Water had helped to reduce crime, but it crime had returned. The police would give local residents advice on crime reduction measures.

22.11.8. Clerk’s Report

Members received a written report from the Locum Clerk on action taken following decisions made at the last council meeting.

NOTED.

22.11.9. Finance

22.11.9.1. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the following payments for September and October 2022 be APPROVED.

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT £
Parish Council account		
02	Mobile phone	10.49
Cllr. Tracy Johnson	Reimbursement for postal charges	13.70
HSBC	Bank charges	5.00
Gill Lungley	Code of Conduct training	140.35
Cllr. Graham Davies	Reimbursement for postal charges	12.75
Sharon Clayton	Salary and office expenses	247.40
Lightsource account		
HSBC	Bank charges	10.00
Med UK Group Ltd.	New pads for defibrillators	38.40
	TOTAL	478.09

22.11.9.2. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the bank reconciliations be deferred for further consideration and approval at the January Parish Council meeting as there were concerns about clarity of the bank transfers between accounts.

22.11.9.3. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that £50,000 should be invested with Cambridge and Counties Bank.

Cllr. Robert Morgan left the meeting to visit the absent Cllr. Keith Faulkner who was a bank signatory and whose signature was urgently needed on the cheque to be sent to Cambridge and Counties Bank.

22.11.10. Financial Regulations

22.11.10.1. Members considered for approval the reviewed Financial Regulations. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the revisions in the Financial Regulations be APPROVED.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

22.11.11. Policy Review

22.11.11.1. Members considered for approval the reviewed Defibrillator Policy. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that following an agreed amendment at para. 6 the revised Defibrillator Policy be APPROVED.

It was further AGREED that volunteers responsible for ensuring the defibrillators were fit for purpose in the four locations would be:

- o Cllr. Paul Harrison for Acton Burnell.
- o Cllr. Carmen Cullis for Frodesley.
- o Cllr. Tracy Johnson for Pitchford.
- o Cllr. Keith Faulkner for Ruckley.

22.11.11.2. Members considered for approval the reviewed Financial Reserves Policy.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the revised Financial Reserves Policy be APPROVED.

22.11.11.3. Members considered for approval the reviewed Investment Strategy.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the revised Investment Strategy be APPROVED.

22.11.12. Planning Matters

22.11.12.1. Planning Applications Considered

Application number	Details
22/04668/FUL 1 Frodesley House Farm Barns, Frodesley	Conversion of one bay of double garage to form utility room. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED no comment.
22/04669/LBC 1 Frodesley House Farm Barns, Frodesley	Conversion of one bay of double garage to form utility room It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED no comment.

22.11.12.2. Planning Decisions

Application number	Details
None received	

22.11.13. Consultation

22.11.13.1. Members considered a response to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities consultation on Funding for Levelling Up Inquiry. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED no comment.

22.11.13.2. Members considered a response to Shropshire Council's draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED no comment.

22.11.14. Traffic Calming

22.11.14.1. No further updates had been received.
NOTED.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

22.11.15. Proposed Footpath from Acton Burnell to Frodesley

22.11.15.1. Members were informed that the existing footpath had been walked and the Jubilee tree planting had been discussed but no amicable agreement had been reached. The tree planting was therefore in abeyance, and the proposed exit for the footpath posed a safety issue if the gate opened onto the road, but this problem could be resolved by situating the gate further back from the road.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that Cllr. John Long would speak to the landowner to try to resolve the issue.

22.11.16. Jubilee Tree Planting

22.11.16.1. Members were informed that discussions were ongoing.

NOTED.

Cllr. Robert Morgan returned to the meeting with the signed cheques.

22.11.17. Next Meeting

It was NOTED that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 January 2023 commencing 7.30pm at Pitchford Village Hall.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act and due to the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted it will be PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the public and press should not be present

22.11.18. Staffing

22.11.18.1. Members considered for approval an increase in the payroll service contract effective from 1 April 2023 based on 1 employee.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the contract with D M Payroll Services Ltd. should continue at an annual fee of £120 and continuation of the contract should be reviewed upon the return of the Clerk.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20:28.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____

MONTH	MINUTE NUMBER	RESOLUTION/AGREED ACTION	TASK COMPLETE	COMMENTS
2022				
November	22.11.9.3	Invest £50,000 with Cambridge and Counties Bank.	Yes	The interest rate is 3.30% and the account matures on 17 November 2023. The expected interest over this term is £1,640.96.
	22.11.18.1	Renew the Parish Council's payroll contract with D M Payroll Services Ltd.	Yes	

TO NOTE:

- The reviewed policies and Financial Regulations can be viewed on the Parish Council's website.
- The damaged signposts at the junction of Evenwood to Cound road and Acton Burnell to Kenley have been reported to Shropshire Council.
- The account with Cambridge & Counties Bank is now open with a deposit amount of £50,000 for a 12-month term at the current interest rate of £3.30%.

Payments for Approval

November and December 2022

Appendix 9a

INVOICE	PAYMENT	REFERENCE	SUPPLIER	PAYMENT	PAYMENT	AMOUNT
DATE	DATE			METHOD	DETAILS	£
Parish Council						
November						
20.10.22	3.11.22	41	O2	DD	Mobile phone	10.49
8.11.22	17.1.23	42	Sharon Clayton	BACS	Travel expenses	11.70
16.11.22	17.1.23	43	Sharon Clayton	BACS	Reimbursement for postage	2.35
5.10.22	21.11.22	44	HMRC	BACS	PAYE	286.58
5.11.22	21.11.22	45	HMRC	BACS	PAYE	189.20
8.11.22	8.11.22	46	HSBC	DD	Bank charges	5.00
30.11.22	30.11.22	47	Sharon Clayton	BACS	Salary/office allowance	317.40
31.10.22	22.11.22	48	Anna Morris	BACS	Salary	282.00
30.11.22	23.11.22	49	Anna Morris	BACS	Salary (backpay)	270.00
20.22.22	06.12.22	50	O2	DD	Mobile phone	10.49
						1,385.21
December						
09.12.22	09.12.22	51	HSBC	DD	Bank charges	5.80
31.12.22	30.12.22	52	Sharon Clayton	BACS	Salary/office allowance	268.20
31.12.22	30.12.22	53	HMRC	BACS	PAYE	206.80
31.12.22	30.12.22	54	HMRC	BACS	PAYE	194.40
20.12.22	03.01.23	55	O2	DD	Mobile phone	10.49
						685.69

November 1385.21
 December 685.69
TOTAL 2070.90

Lightsource						
November						
3.11.22	3.11.22	LS22	Bank charges	DD	HSBC	5.80
December						
04.12.22	4.12.22	LS23	Bank charges	DD	HSBC	5.80

TOTAL 11.60

Bank reconciliation for all accounts:

	£	£	£
31-Dec-22			
Parish Council			
Current account 10100714	54671.39		
BMM account 82259869	24282.96		
		<u>78954.35</u>	
Less:			
Cheque to Cambridge & Counties	-50000.00		
Payments to be authorised	-14.05		
Payments to HMRC	-401.20		
O2 payment not yet debited	-10.49		
Transferred to Lightsource	<u>-1000.00</u>		
	-51425.74		
		<u>27528.61</u>	
Lightsource			
Current account 42260026	104.55		
Account 72260034	4080.61		
		<u>4185.16</u>	
TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS			<u><u>31713.77</u></u>

March

BALANCE	-9026.63	14,484.99	30523.00	81523.00	28100.00	28100.00	55000.00	4000.00
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Bank balance as at 30 November 2022:

Current account 42260026	104.55
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Account 72260034	4080.61
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4185.16

BALANCE **-£7,867.65** **£8,267.16** £30,523.00 £31,523.00 £28,100.00 £28,100.00 £55,000.00 £54,000.00 £55,000.00 £55,000.00

Bank balance as at 31 December 2022:

Current account 10100714	£54,671.39
BMM account 82259869	£24,282.96
Less unauthorised expenditure	-£14.05
Less uncleared cheque to Cambridge & Counties Bank	-£50,000.00
Less transferred to Lightsource	-£1,000.00
	<u>£27,940.30</u>

less uncleared BACS to HMRC **401.20**

£27,539.10

less not yet debited **-10.49**

£27,528.61

Budget 2023-2024

The Parish Council has agreed not to increase the precept over a number of years now so as to reduce its general reserve to the generally accepted level of 6-12 months operating costs. There was a significant reduction in 22/23 as the reserve was used to cover CiLCA training for the Clerk. A reserve of approximately £6300 is expected to remain at the end of the year.

Budgeted expenditure for 23/24 is some £7200 and the current precept stands at £5700. It would seem reasonable to move towards ensuring that the precept fully covers the Council's operating costs. However, to do this in 23/24 the Council will need to raise the Band D precept from £22.29 to £26.89 - a few pounds, but an increase of over 20%. This would leave the reserve at the 22/23 end of year level.

It is suggested that the Council considers a smaller increase of around 10% which would raise £6500 and reduce reserves to around £5700, still well above the 6-month minimum. A further increase for 24/25 can then be considered to bring income fully in line with expenditure. However, this is for discussion and agreement when the budget is considered on 17 January 2023.

Cllr. Paul Harrison
Chairman

ABPFR&L Parish Council – Defibrillator Replacement 2022

The Council owns and maintains four defibrillators, one each in Acton Burnell, Pitchford, Frodesley and Ruckley. These were purchased in 2017. The unit at Pitchford had been faulty and intermittently out of service for some time. This unit and those at Frodesley and Ruckley are no longer recommended by the British Heart Foundation.

The defibrillator cabinets for all four units had been superseded by more robust weather-proof designs. Following an inspection, MedUK Ltd. (a local company who provide defibrillator services widely in the area) offered to replace the three outdated units and all four cabinets, including installation, for £5292 including VAT.

A check was made of prices on-line and it was noted that the Defib Safe 2 Cabinets retail at around £560 each. The iPad SP1 defibrillators retail at between £1100 and £1600 including VAT – plus delivery. The lowest price for the hardware alone would therefore have been around £5540 plus delivery and installation.

Given the above price comparison and the serious consequences of a unit being unserviceable when needed it was agreed to place an order with MedUK to carry out immediate replacements without seeking further alternatives.

Cllr. Paul Harris
Chairman

MODEL COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL

Appendix 13

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Protocol is to guide councillors and officers of the council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between councillors and officers as they work together. Employees who are required to give advice to councillors are referred to as "officers" throughout.

A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between councillors and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the council.

This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to councillors and the employment terms and conditions of officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.

The following extract from the Local Government Association guidance on the 2020 Model councillor Code of Conduct states that:

"Both councillors and officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.

At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.

[Councillors of the executive,] Chairs and vice chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with officers that are more complex. Such councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other councillors or other officers.

Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed by councillors. They are responsible for implementing decisions of councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.

It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In

turn officers should respect a councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a councillor-officer protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both councillors and officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships."

This Protocol covers:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the officer;
- Relationships between councillors and officers;
- Where/who a councillor or an officer should go to if they have concerns;
- Who is responsible for making decisions.

BACKGROUND

This Protocol is intended to assist councillors and officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment.

The reputation and integrity of the council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of councillors and the officer working together to support each other's roles.

The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between councillors and officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship

ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The respective roles of councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

- Councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one and other, but their responsibilities are distinct.
- Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only for their term of office.
- Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council and relevant committees.

Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
- To monitor and review council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;
- To represent the council externally; and
- To act as advocates for their constituents.

All councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with the officer, regardless of their status and should be treated equally.

Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the council. This is the officer's responsibility, and the officer will be acting on instructions from the council or its committees, within an agreed job description.

In line with the councillors' Code of Conduct, a councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council.

Officers can expect councillors:

- to give strategic leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that councillors have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the council
- to work constructively in partnership with officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities
- to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines
- to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality
- to recognise that officers do not work under the instruction of individual councillors or groups
- not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure.
- to treat all officers, partners (those external people with whom the council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion.
- not to request officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the council's policies and procedures
- not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the council or in their role as a councillor without proper and lawful authority
- not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly
- to comply at all times with the councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the council.
- respect the impartiality of officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties
- do not ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner
- do not ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given

Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees

Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

Officers

The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the agreed policies of the council.

Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the council, including directing and overseeing the work of any more junior officers. Councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

In performing their role officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst officers will respect a councillor's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

Officers must:

- implement decisions of the council and its committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and are duly recorded. This includes respecting the decisions made, regardless of any different advice given to the council or whether the decision differs from the officer's view.
- work in partnership with councillors in an impartial and professional manner
- treat councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- treat all councillors, partners and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion.
- assist and advise all parts of the council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the council's formal decisions.
- respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the council's standards protocol
- be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for councillors, the media or other sections of the public.
- act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- provide support and learning and development opportunities for councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the council's training and development policy
- not seek to use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly

- comply, at all times, with the Officers' Code of Conduct, and such other policies or procedures approved by the council

Officers have the right not to support councillors in any role other than that of councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol.

In giving advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the officer's own. If a councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging his/her responsibilities.

There are exceptional circumstances where a councillor can fulfil the role of officer, for example where there is a vacancy. This can only be done if the councillor is not paid for the role and should only ever be short-term while the council seeks to fill a vacancy. There will need to be a particular clear understanding of when the councillor is acting as a councillor and when acting as the Proper Officer.

The Relationship: General

Councillors and officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are accountable to the public, whereas officers are accountable to the council as a whole.

At the heart of this Protocol is the importance of mutual respect and also of civility. Councillor/officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Individual councillors should not actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the council's collectively-determined course of action.

Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer, or of officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public or on social media. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

A councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
- ensure that any criticism is made in private
- take up the concern with the chair

Neither should an officer raise with a councillor matters relating to the conduct or capability of another councillor or officer or to the internal management of the council in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

Expectations

All councillors can expect:

- A commitment from officers to the council as a whole, and not to any individual councillor, group of councillors or political group;
- A working partnership;
- Officers to understand and support respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- A timely response from officers to enquiries and complaints;
- Officer's professional and impartial advice, not influenced by political views or personal preferences;
- Timely, up to date, information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities or positions that they hold;
- Officers to be aware of and sensitive to the public and political environment locally;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality from officers and other councillors;
- Training and development opportunities to help them carry out their role effectively;
- Not to have personal issues raised with them by officers outside the council's agreed procedures;
- That officers will not use their contact with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

Officers can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership;
- An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- Leadership and direction;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality;
- Not to be bullied or to be put under undue pressure;
- That councillors will not use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- That councillors will at all times comply with the council's adopted Code of Conduct.

Some general principles

Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can confuse their separate roles and get in the way of the proper conduct of council business, not least by creating a perception in others that a particular councillor or officer is getting preferential treatment.

Special relationships with particular individuals are not recommended as it can create suspicion that an employee favours that councillor above others.

The Proper Officer (usually called the Clerk) is the head of paid services and has a line-management responsibility to all other staff. Communications should be made directly with the Proper Officer, unless it is agreed by the Proper Officer that such communications may take place directly with other officers over a particular matter. Councillors should not give instructions directly to the Proper Officer's staff without the express approval of the Proper Officer.

COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Councillors are free to approach officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Officer.

The legal rights of councillors to inspect council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has a prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.

In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the council.

For completeness, councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another councillor, this should be made clear to the original councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed.

Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the

foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

Official letters or emails on behalf of the council should normally be sent out under the name of the officer, rather than under the name of a councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the council should never be sent out in the name of a councillor.

Correspondence to individual councillors from officers should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked "confidential". In doing so, the relevant officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

PRESS AND MEDIA

Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the council's activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant. It is essential to ensure that decisions on publicity are properly made in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the council's Media Protocol.

The officer may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.

Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the officer.

The chair (or chair of a committee) may act as spokespersons for the council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the council but should liaise with the officer on all forms of contact with the press and media. The council may also appoint individual councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise but this should only be done with the agreement of the council.

The council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance and the council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.

The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period>

For more detailed information and guidance regarding the role of councillors in connection with the use of social media, reference should be made to the council's Social Media Protocol where there is one in place.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Procedure for officers:

From time to time the relationship between councillors and the officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is important that the council adopts a formal grievance protocol or procedure.

The principal council's monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role or it may be necessary to seek independent advice. The chair of the council should not attempt to deal with grievances or work related performance or line management issues on their own. The council should delegate authority to a small group of councillors to deal with all personnel matters.

The law requires all employers to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. Adopting a grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way.

Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the councillors' Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council's monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The council may however try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

Procedure for councillors:

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the officer in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the council's disciplinary procedure.

Civility and Respect Pledge suggested agenda item:**To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge**

Definition of Civility and Respect
<p>Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.</p> <p>Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.</p>

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

By our council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that our council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Signing up is a simple process, which requires councils to register and agree to the following statements:

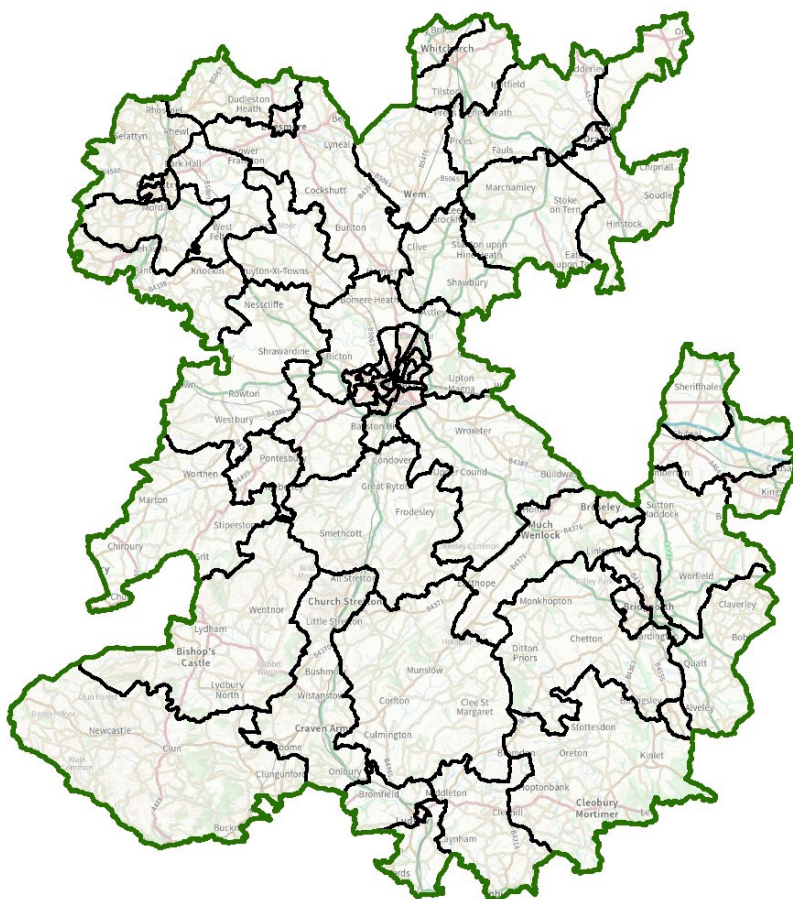
Statement	Tick to agree
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff	
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors	
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	

Civility and Respect Pledge suggested agenda item:

To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge

Have your say

Shropshire Electoral Review



The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is asking for your views on our electoral review of Shropshire. The review will agree new electoral divisions across the council.

- Do you have suggestions about where your electoral divisions should be?
- Where do people in your area go to access local facilities, such as shops and leisure activities?
- Which areas do you identify as your local community?

Consultation closes: 30 January 2023



reviews@lgbce.org.uk



www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk
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