



BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

Coronation Halls
Coronation Road
Bleadon. North Somerset. BS24 0PG
www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk
parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk

8th February 2024

Members of the public and press are entitled to be at the following meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960 Section 1 unless excluded by the Parish Council by resolution during the whole or part of the proceedings. Such entitlement does not however include the right to speak on any matter except at the commencement of the meeting given over specifically for that purpose.

Dear Councillor:

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of Bleadon Parish Council, to be held at Youth Centre Hall, Coronation Road, Bleadon. BS24 0PG on Monday 19th February 2024 at 7.30pm, when the following business will be transacted.

C P Bolt

Parish Clerk & RFO

Before the meeting begins there will be a public participation session – *This session is open to the Public to present comments, observations, information, petitions or lead deputations and is the only time members of the public may participate. (Please note that the Council is unable to make formal decisions under this item LGA1972 Sch 12, paras 10(2)(b))*

- i) Members of the public.
- ii) Beat Managers Report
- iii) Ward Councillor's report.

A G E N D A

374.1 To receive **Apologies for Absence** (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

374.2 **Declarations of Interest** on any agenda items.

374.3 **To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting on Monday 8th of January 2024 (pages 4 - 7).

374.4 **Reports from Working Parties/Committees.**

Personnel & Contracts Committee – 24th January 2024. The minutes are attached for information only. **There are no matters requiring discussion or determination by the Council** (pages 8 - 9).

374.5 To note the training and events available and agree any attendance.

- i) FREE Scribe Training <https://www.scribeaccounts.com/scribe-academy-training>
- ii) NALC virtual training <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-events/online-events>

374.6 **Financial/Staffing Matters** (pages 10 - 12)

- i) To authorise bills for payment for February.
- ii) To note the Parish Council's end of January bank balances and bank reconciliation and end of January net position.

374.7 **Report of the Parish Clerk** (pages 13 - 69).

Decision Items

1. Internal Audit Report 2023/24 – to note and comment upon the findings of the Internal Auditor.
2. Standing Orders Review – to approve proposed revisions to Standing Orders.
3. Financial Regulations Review – to approve proposed revisions to Financial Regulations.
4. Risk Assessment Policy – to review the Council's Risk Assessment Policy.
5. Highways/Traffic Management – to authorise funding a feasibility study in relation to permanent traffic lights at the junction of the A370 and Bleadon Road.
6. IT Requirements – to authorise the Clerk to purchase new hardware and software.
7. Calendar of Meetings – to approve meeting dates for the next Municipal Year.
8. Halls Environs Phase 2 – to agree the preparation of a specification for the next stage of works.
9. Toilet Cleaning Contract – this will be the subject of a confidential report.

Information Items

1. Defibrillators

374.8 To **consider and comment upon the following planning applications:**

23/P/2833/TBCA - Prior approval for a proposed temporary use as a recreational campsite for up to 50 tent pitches. Land At Riverside Holiday Village, Bridgwater Road, Bleadon. BS24 0AN

24/P/0133/HHPA – Prior approval request for the erection of a single-storey rear extension with a flat roof that would 1) extend beyond the rear wall of the house by 4.3 metres; 2) have a maximum height of 3.85 metres and 3) have eaves that are 3.50 metres high.

374.9 Date of the next meeting(s):

- Parish Council Meeting Monday 11th March 2024, 7.30pm at Coronation Hall



Avon and Somerset Police

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

January 2024 Bleadon Neighbourhood Report

Calls Received – 17

Road related-4 Assault-2 Concern for welfare-4 weapons-1 Public order-1 Missing Person-2 Criminal damage-1 Suisidal-1 ASB-1

Most crimes reported are isolated incidents which have occurred within dwellings and are unlikely to have any effect on the wider community.

For awareness the only crime in the village was a Road related his month

STREETSAFE

If there is a public place where you have felt unsafe, tell us where and why.

Anonymously flag areas on a map where you don't feel safe.

The graphic features the word 'STREETSAFE' in large, bold, white letters on a black background. Below it, on a purple background, is a QR code and two lines of white text. The QR code is positioned to the right of the text.

Email: 8338@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Police Priorities/Action Undertaken/Advice/Upcoming events:

Please also see attached link for our street safe website [Report feeling unsafe in public spaces \(StreetSafe\) | Avon and Somerset Police](#). This is a great way to report areas you feel unsafe, this maybe inadequate lighting problems with any other issues , this is not a way of reporting please still use 101/999 or online



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE CORONATION HALL AT 7.30pm ON MONDAY 8th JANUARY 2024.

PRESENT: Councillors Mary Sheppard (Chairman), ID Clarke, Ann Davies, Jo Gower-Crane, Mark Howe, Andy Scarisbrick (Vice-chairman) and Steve Sugg.

IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Bolt (Parish Clerk)
WARD COUNCILLORS: Cllr Terry Porter
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Five

Before the meeting was convened, members of the public were invited to speak.

i) **Members of the public**

A resident referred to a planning application in relation to Fakeham Lane and the increasing pressures placed upon running an agricultural business.
A resident raised concerns that drivers appeared to be ignoring the road restrictions at the junction of Bleadon Road and the A370.
A resident questioned whether it might be possible to ask the Highways Authority to address overgrown bushes at the junction of Chestnut Lane and Bleadon Road.

ii) **Beat Manager's Report**

The written report forming part of the agenda papers was noted.

For up-to-date information residents can keep in touch via the Avon & Somerset website or follow them on social media, Facebook "Weston & Worle police" or Twitter "ASPNorthSom" or email 8338@avonandsomerset.police.uk

iii) **Ward Councillors' report**

Cllr Porter provided an update in relation to the following issues:

Both ward Councillors had concerns regarding the diversion arising from the closure of Bridge Road and had raised these concerns with North Somerset Council's Highways Department.

Both ward Councillors were in discussions regarding the play area relating to the development at the former quarry site.

The 126 bus service had been re-instated. Although this did not directly affect the parish of Bleadon, it would serve neighbouring areas such as Bleadon Hill.

The planning application in relation to additional houses in Rockville had been called in for further consideration by a North Somerset Council committee on 17th January 2024.

Cllr Sheppard opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

The meeting was convened.

373.1 To receive apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

None.

373.2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Howe in respect of agenda item 373.9.

373.3 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Monday 11th December 2023.

Resolved: To approve the Parish Council minutes of 11th December 2023.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

The minutes of the meeting were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

373.4 To consider reports from Working Parties/Committees

There had been no meetings of Working Parties/Committees since the previous Parish Council meeting.

373.5 Local Plan

Cllr Gower-Crane provided an update in relation to a number of meetings and responses made to the draft Local Plan relating to the Parish Council's concerns regarding the lack of emphasis upon the protection of land for food production. It was noted that a formal response would be made following the open meeting with residents scheduled for the evening of 15th January 2024.

373.6 Training and Events

The availability of SCRIBE and NALC training was noted.

373.7 Financial/Staffing Matters

i) To authorise bills for payment for January.

It was noted that the cost of energy supply to the toilets had been based upon an estimate of £19.24. The actual bill received was £19.73. As a consequence, the total bills for payment for January was £0.49 higher than the figure stated in the report.

Resolved: To authorise the payments for December of £2,227.47.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

(Councillors Ann Davies and Andy Scarisbrick were duly authorised to action the online payments)

ii) To note the Parish Council's end of December budget position, bank balances and bank reconciliations.

The Parish Council's end of December position, bank balances and bank reconciliations were noted.

373.8 Parish Council Precept and Budget 2024/25

Councillors considered a report setting out an update to previously discussed budget figures and the proposed precept for 2024/25.

It was noted that the proposed precept for 2024/25 was £67,800 which, based upon the Council Tax base figures provided by North Somerset Council would result in a 4% increase on the precept for the current financial year. A modest increase in the precept was considered necessary as the Parish Council was expecting increased contract costs of up to 40% on its externally commissioned works. The total proposed budget for 2024/25 would be £138,387. Additional income from bank interest and

rent was anticipated to be £1,550 which, along with a range of other measures, would reduce the impact upon the precept. The primary reason for the difference between the precept figure and the proposed budget related to the number of projects the Council was planning to progress, which would be largely financed through the use of CIL and reserves.

It was noted that there would be an opportunity for Councillors to revisit cost centres to help ensure meaningful budget monitoring.

Resolved:

- i. That the Bleadon Parish Precept for 2024/25 is set at £67,800.
- ii. That the budget for 2024/25 is set at £138,387.

The resolutions were correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

373.9 Report of the Parish Clerk

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Resolved:

- i. That Councillor Sugg be confirmed as the Council lead in relation to Highways/Transport and Historic Monuments/Memorials
- ii. That Councillor Davies be confirmed as the Council lead in relation to Social Activities.

The resolutions were correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

2. Closure of Bridge Road

Resolved: That the closure of Bridge Road and the subsequent diversions be added to the agenda for the residents meeting on 15th January 2024.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

3. Allotment – Replacement Gate

Resolved: That the Parish Clerk, in consultation with Cllr Sheppard, be authorised to agree a specification and appoint a contractor to replace the allotment gate (and associated works), subject to the Council's contribution not exceeding £500.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

4. Playground Bark

Resolved: That the Parish Clerk be authorised to purchase additional play bark subject to the cost not exceeding £400.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

373.10 Planning Applications

23/P/2833/TBCA - Prior Approval for a proposed temporary use as a recreational campsite for up to 50 tent pitches. Land At Riverside Holiday Village, Bridgwater Road, Bleadon. BS24 0AN

Resolved:

That the application be supported.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

23/P/2685/FUL - Proposed change of use and conversion of 2no. Existing garages to form 3no. Holiday lets. Alterations to hardstanding and landscaping alongside the creation of timber decking. Gorselands, Roman Road, Bleadon. BS24 0AD

Resolved:

That the application be supported, subject to clarification regarding the disposal of foul waste.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

23/P/2840/AOC - Request to discharge condition number 6 (Arboriculture Method Statement) on application 23/P/1269/FUL. Land At Wick Wharf, Fakeham Road, Bleadon. Grid Ref: E 332940 N 157410 - additional comments have also been received in relation to related application 1270/FUL.

Councillors noted the proposed condition discharge and concluded that it was not necessary to add any additional comments to that previously submitted in relation to application 1270/FUL.

Resolved:

That the application be noted.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

373.11 Date of the next meeting

Parish Council Meeting Monday **19th February 2024**, 7:30pm (venue to be confirmed)

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:25

.....Chairman

.....Date



MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL & CONTRACTS COMMITTEE OF BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE CHURCH ROOMS AT 7.00pm ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JANUARY 2024.

PRESENT: Councillors: Andy Scarisbrick (Chairman), ID Clarke and Mary Sheppard

IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Bolt (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Jo Gower-Crane.

2. Members' declarations of interest on any agenda item.

No declarations of interests were received.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on the 26th July 2023.

Resolved: To approve the Personnel Committee minutes of 26th July 2023.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

The minutes of the meetings to be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. To note changes to the Terms of Reference of the Committee

Councillors noted that the Parish Council had delegated responsibility to the Committee to prepare specifications, agree a procurement process and evaluate bids in relation to the Council's external service contracts.

5. Exclusion of the press and public. (The Committee is recommended to resolve that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 6 by reason of the confidential nature of the item of business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

Resolved: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 6.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

6. To consider proposed changes to existing external service contracts and agree procurement arrangements for the appointment of contractors.

Councillors had a full and productive debate covering a range of issues, including:

- The merits of reconfiguring current contracts
- How to maximise interest in the contracts
- Scope for streamlining proposed contract terms and specifications
- Future cost pressures
- Evaluation criteria
- Contract performance
- Councillor and stakeholder engagement in the evaluation process
- Procurement timetable
- Potential implications on the workload of the Clerk

Resolved:

- i. That a new contract framework be approved based upon the following:
 - Grounds Maintenance Contract
 - Environmental Services Contract
 - Toilet Cleaning Contract
 - Changes to the duties of the post of the Parish Clerk & RFO
- ii. That a revised timetable to secure new contracts for 1st May 2024 be established.
- iii. That the Clerk be authorised to:
 - Finalise detailed specifications and contract terms in consultation with the Chair of the Personnel and Contracts Committee
 - Agree any changes to the timetable/procurement process in consultation with the Chair of the Personnel and Contracts Committee
 - Approach potential stakeholders to consider how they might be involved in any evaluation process.
- iv. That the formal evaluation of any bids received be undertaken by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council prior to the submission of any proposed contract awards to a meeting of the Council.
- v. That in relation to the Toilet Cleaning Contract, the Clerk be authorised to negotiate a proposed extension to the contract and the outcome of those discussions be reported to Council for final determination.

The resolutions were correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

7. To agree the date of the next meeting.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be influenced by the re-working of the procurement timetable and would, therefore, be determined in discussion with the Chairman.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:20

.....Chairman

.....Date

Financial/Staffing Matters
19th February 2024

1. Bills for Payment

- 1.1 Bills for payment for February 2024 are attached at Appendix 1. There are no issues requiring further explanation.

Recommendation:

- i) That the bills for payment for January are approved.
- ii) That Councillors Andy Scarisbrick and Ann Davies be duly authorised to action the online payments.

2. Bank Balance and Bank Reconciliation

- 2.1 The Parish Council's end of January bank balances and bank reconciliation at the end of January are attached at Appendix 2. There are no issues requiring further explanation.

Recommendation:

That the Parish Council's end of January bank balances and bank reconciliation and end of January net position are noted.

Bills for Payment - 8th January to 19th February 2024

Bleadon Parish Council

Meth	Payee	Details	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comments	Minute agreed	Power
	Already Paid							
DD	3 Business Solutions	Mobile	£14.82	£2.96	£17.78		364.23	LGA 1972, s. 112
DD	YU	Public Toilets Electricity	£19.28	£0.96	£20.24		365.7(ii)	Public Health Act 1875.164
	To Pay							
BACS	Adrian Project Services	Village Ranger	£602.00		£602.00		364.23	Public Health Act 1875.164
BACS	Blue Spot	Cleaning of Public Toilets	£136.50		£136.50		364.23	PHA1936, s87
BACS	Drinkwater Tree Services	Tree works around village centre	£680.00	£136.00	£816.00		372.11	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	Microshade	Laptop Anti virus and managed service	£36.00	£7.20	£43.20		364.23	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	Bridget C Bowen	Internal audit	£350.00		£350.00		368.15	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	Taylor Thorne	Printing - public meeting	£78.00		£78.00		373.9	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	St Peter & Paul	Room Hire - 24/1/24	£22.50		£22.50		364.23	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	Youth Centre	Room Hire - 15/1/24	£33.00		£33.00		373.9	LGA 1972, s. 112
BACS	Youth Centre	Room Hire - 19/2/24	£33.00		£33.00		364.23	LGA 1972, s. 112
SO	Salary	Parish Clerk	£1,260.77		£1,260.77		361.6	LGA 1972, s. 112
SO	Brian Robinson	Clock Winding	£25.00		£25.00		364.23	Parish Councils Act 1957, s2
DD	Lloyds	Credit Card Charge	£3.00		£3.00		364.23	LGA 1972, s. 112
		Totals	£3,293.87	£147.12	£3,440.99			

Bleadon Parish Council

Prepared by: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/01/2024		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		57,524.92
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/01/2024		134,381.58
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/01/2024		191,906.50
	Cash in Hand 31/01/2024 (per Cash Book)		59,770.70
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/12/2023	0.00	
	Bleadon Parish Council Current 31/12/2023	25,442.84	
	Bleadon Parish Council Deposit 31/12/2023	106,692.96	
			132,135.80
Less unrepresented payments		132,135.80	
Plus unrepresented receipts			
Adjusted Bank Balance		132,135.80	
A = B Checks out OK			

Report of the Parish Clerk & RFO

19th February 2024

Decision Items

1. Internal Audit Report 2023/24

- 1.1 The Internal Auditor's report is attached at Appendix 1. The report is generally positive but identifies a number of areas requiring action or review. Several of the issues identified are the subject of reports elsewhere on the agenda. Those that are not have either already been addressed or will be addressed prior to the Auditor's next visit.

Recommendation:

That Councillors note the findings of the Internal Auditor.

2. Standing Orders Review

- 2.1 The Internal Auditor's report noted changes arising from the Public Procurement Regulations which are not reflected in the Council's approved Standing Orders. The changes are technical in nature and were not reflected in the model National Association on Local Council's Standing Orders which the Council adopted.
- 2.2 The revised Standing Orders attached at Appendix 2 address the recommendations of the Internal Auditor. They also address a number of other inconsistencies in the existing Standing Orders, which largely relate to formatting and other minor aspects.

Recommendation:

That the revised Standing Orders are approved.

3. Financial Regulations Review

- 3.1 The same changes required to Standing Orders in relation to Public Procurement Regulations also apply to the Council's currently approved Financial Regulations. Accordingly, the revised Financial Regulations attached at Appendix 3 incorporate the necessary changes,
- 3.2 Further changes to Financial Regulations are proposed in relation to delegation limits to the Clerk. The proposed changes seek to provide greater flexibility for the Clerk to address issues which might present a risk to service delivery or result in reputational damage where no budget provision currently exists. Under the current wording of Financial Regulations, the Clerk only has authority to take action in the event of 'extreme' risk to service delivery. In truth, there are very few circumstances which might meet this threshold. However, there have been a number of circumstances where works have been necessary but have not progressed in a particularly timely manner. It is also proposed that the value at which quotations should be sought is increased from £100 to £250.

- 3.3 The above changes should have the dual effect of allowing the Council to be more responsive to issues, as well as ensuring that the focus of the Clerk's time is upon the delivery of improvements. The changes will still provide safeguards through reporting requirements and it would be open to Councillors to implement stricter controls if considered necessary.

Recommendation:

That the revised Financial Regulations are approved.

4. Risk Assessment Policy

- 4.1 The Council is required to review its Risk Assessment Policy before the end of the financial year. Accordingly, the Risk Assessment Policy has been reviewed and updated. A revised version is attached at Appendix 4.

Recommendation:

That the revised Risk Assessment Policy is approved.

5. Highways/Transport Improvements

- 5.1 Debates arising from the closure of Bridge Road have heightened the need for serious consideration of permanent lights at the junction of Bleadon Road and the A370. The Clerk has been in discussions with representatives of North Somerset Council Highways Department in this respect and it is proposed that the Parish Council and North Somerset Council jointly fund a feasibility study to establish the viability of potential engineering solutions and the likely costs associated with these solutions. The feasibility study would be formally commissioned by North Somerset Council using their approved contractors. The exact costs of the feasibility study are not yet known but are anticipated to be in the region of £6,000. As a consequence, it is suggested that the Council agrees to participate on a 50/50 funding basis, subject to the total cost to the Parish Council not exceeding £3,000.
- 5.2 The Council has budgeted for highways related schemes as part of its approved budget for 2024/5. In the event that the costs fall before the start of the next financial year, the Council would be in a position to use reserves to fund any necessary contribution.

Recommendation:

That the Council agrees to jointly fund a feasibility study in relation to permanent lights at the junction of Bleadon Road and the A370, subject to the Parish Council's contribution not exceeding £3,000.

6. IT Requirements

- 6.1 The Council has, as part of its 2024/25 budget provided for replacement IT for councillors and the Clerk. As referenced in the Risk Assessment Policy, IT would normally be replaced on a rolling cycle and the hardware provided to councillors is nearing the end of its useful technological life and the main Council laptop used by the Clerk is approximately 7 years old and is no longer fit for purpose. Added to this, the tablets provided to councillors have

proven to be inadequate and, in a number of cases, unworkable. As a consequence, most councillors are either without technology or using their own devices. Neither of these scenarios is particularly desirable moving forward.

- 6.2 In order to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated, it is suggested that any new IT meets the following common specification:
- The processor should be at least an i5(10th Generation or later)/Ryzen AMD 5/Apple M1 or equivalent
 - There should be at least 8GB of RAM
 - There should be at least 256GB of memory
 - The operating system should be either Windows 11 (or with a free upgrade to Windows 11) or MacOS – this would rule out chrome and linux based operating systems
 - Standard software package should be Microsoft Office/365
 - Ideally it should have some form of physical security beyond just a password – although this is more of a desirable than an essential requirement
- 6.3 Councillors have also been asked to identify any specific requirements to ensure that any new hardware meets accessibility needs. In a number of cases, individual councillors have identified the requirement for laptops with the additional functionality of touch sensitive screens and, in some cases, colour differentiated keyboards.
- 6.4 Touch sensitive laptops are currently available for in the region of £400 per unit. Models with differentiated keyboards are more expensive, but not prohibitively so and it is important that the technology provided to Councillors is fit for purpose.
- 6.5 In addition to the hardware requirements, the Council will also need to purchase Microsoft software bundles for each device, together with Adobe software for the Clerk. In addition, two user licences may be needed for desktop publishing software to be able to produce future editions of the Parish News, although it may be that the most economical means of achieving this is through purchasing ‘add ons’ as part of the Microsoft software packages. Off-site storage and virus/malware support packages will also need to be secured, together with a service contract for maintenance and support. Dependent upon where the new hardware is purchased, service contracts may be integral.
- 6.6 Peripheral devices such as cables and cases may also need to be purchased. It is also recommended that the Council gives consideration to purchasing a battery powered pocket sized projector as a number of smaller venues the Council uses for its meetings do not have projectors available. These devices are not overly expensive (typically less than £200) and their portability is such that Councillors would be able to use without the need for power sources and cable connections, which may prove useful for informal meetings with parishioners, district councillors and others.
- 6.7 It is not really practicable to submit a detailed proposal for consideration by the Council as technology prices can fluctuate and there are a number of variables e.g, whether software and or service contracts are included, which can have a bearing upon whether or not a particular model of laptop represents the best available deal for the Council. As a consequence, authority is sought for the Clerk to purchase up to 8 new devices which meet the above-mentioned specification, subject to the average price per device not exceeding £450. Authority is also sought for the Clerk to purchase the required software and to enter

into service contracts to provide security, offsite backup and ongoing support on terms which represent the best value for money for the Council.

Recommendation:

- i. That the Clerk be authorised to purchase replacement IT and associated software and support packages on the basis now reported.
- ii. That the Clerk be authorised to dispose of existing IT equipment on terms which are the most advantageous to the Council.

7. Calendar of Future Meetings

7.1 A proposed Calendar of Future Meetings is attached at Appendix 5.

Recommendation:

That the Calendar of Meetings is approved.

8. Halls Environs – Phase 2

8.1 Preliminary discussions have taken place with the Project Sponsor and representatives of the Hall Management Committee regarding the next stage of works in relation to the car park, halls and surrounding area. Individual Councillors have also shared their thinking with the Clerk and the emerging priorities for the next phase of works would seem to be as follows:

- Emptying of Jubilee Gardens and remedial works to the walls (if required) and subsequent re-planting scheme.
- Replacement of the parking barriers adjacent to the Play area (replacement is likely to be more cost effective than stripping and repainting the existing barriers).
- Digging out and putting down gravel/hard surface around the curtilage of the Coronation Halls to ensure safe and meaningful egress from the fire escape.
- Digging out and putting down gravel/hard surface to the elevated section at the rear of the Coronation Halls – and relocation of the container (potentially to the allotment site).
- Removing planters/wall section adjacent to the toilet block to create a full width footpath/improved access.

8.2 The budget provision for the project has been set at £12,000. However, until Jubilee Gardens has been emptied and the walls checked for structural stability, it is not possible to fully allocate the budget or make a definitive assessment as to whether all of the above mentioned aspects can be addressed within the agreed budget. As a consequence, it is recommended that the Clerk be authorised, in consultation with Cllr Davies as the Project Sponsor and Cllrs Sheppard and Clarke (as the joint Chairs of the Open Spaces Working Group) to finalise a specification based upon the phasing suggested above. This will enable the Council to obtain costed estimates for all potential elements and progress the excavation works at Jubilee Gardens as a priority. Any contract award – whether in full or in part – would be reserved to full Council. However, the hope would be that tenders would be received and evaluated in time for Council to award the contract for the excavation of Jubilee Gardens at its next meeting on 11th March 2024.

8.3 The works to the planters/wall area will require clarity regarding boundary ownership. As a consequence, it is also recommended that the Clerk be authorised to undertake Land

Registry searches. It would also be prudent for searches in relation to other areas e.g. churchyard walls, at the same time.

Recommendations:

- i. That the Clerk be authorised, in consultation with Cllrs Clarke, Davies and Sheppard to agree a specification for the next phase of works in relation to the car park/halls environs and seek formal tenders in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- ii. That the Clerk be authorised to undertake Land Registry/other searches to confirm property boundaries and any conditions associated with the use of the Council's assets.

9. Toilet Cleaning Contract

- 9.1 A confidential report in relation to the proposed extension of the toilet cleaning contract will be tabled at the meeting.

Information Items

1. Defibrillators

- 1.1 The Council has been successful in obtaining a 50% grant to fund the installation of up to two more defibrillators. Councillors have previously suggested that the Veale might be a priority area for an additional defibrillator. One of the requirements for siting a defibrillator is access to a power supply and the Council does have a streetlight in this location. However, it would also be possible to site the defibrillator on private property and agree a contribution towards power costs. Whilst no immediate decision is needed, Councillors may want to give consideration to location(s) and the possibility of using the next edition of Parish News to seek views in this respect and whether property owners might be prepared to site a defibrillator.

Please see file named **Bleadon Internal Audit Report**

Bridget.C.Bowen
Chartered Accountant



Bridget.C.Bowen FCA
86 High Street
Weston
Bath BA1 4DD

Tel: 07465 416597
Email: bridget.c.bowen@outlook.com

Craig Bolt
Clerk to Bleadon Parish Council
Coronation Halls,
Coronation Rd,
Bleadon BS24 0PG

9 January 2024

Dear Craig

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

Internal audit report - Year ended 31 March 2024

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) require all Town and Parish Councils to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of their risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

I am bound by the ethical guidelines of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. I confirm that I am independent of the Council.

The internal audit work I have carried out has been planned to enable me to give my opinion on the control objectives set out in the Annual Internal Auditor's Report on the 2023-24 Annual Governance and Accounts Return.

I have complied with the legal requirements and proper practices set out in:

- 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners' Guide (England)' 2023
- The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended).

I was appointed as internal auditor to the Parish Council on 14 August 2023.

My first internal audit review for 2023-24 was undertaken on 9 January 2024.

BCB

Please see file named Appendix 2 – Standing Orders Revised February 2024

Revised February 2024



BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS POLICY

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BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Adopted – 11th January 2021 – Minute Reference 339.7.5

Reviewed 19th February 2024 – Minute Reference

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1. General

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts.
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money.
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council.

¹ Model Standing Orders for Councils (2018 Edition) is available from NALC (©NALC 2018)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.14. In addition, the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts.
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £500 and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

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

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

2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements or similar document as evidence of verification. This

activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.

- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council.
 - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year.
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships and
 - is not involved in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council.
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit

Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

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

3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning

- 3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than November prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the council.
- 3.2. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.3. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.4. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

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

- the council for all items over £500.
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.

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

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

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

- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless previously agreed with specific budget headings.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee.
- 4.5. In cases of substantial risk to the delivery of council services or reputational damage to the Council, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. The council shall seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories.
- 5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the

meeting at which the payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.

- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available council meeting.
- 5.5. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
 - b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or
 - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

- 5.8. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £500 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.
- 5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.10. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.11. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6. Instructions for the making of payments

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or an on-line method including standing orders, direct debits and BACs or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council.
- 6.4. Cheques or online payments drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council shall be authorised or signed in the case of cheques by two members of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. Cheques when implemented for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by

variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council annually.
- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council annually.
- 6.10. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.
- 6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.14. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the

council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

- 6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.17. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk/RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council in writing before any order is placed.
- 6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council monthly..
- 6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk/RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.21. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact.

7. Payment of salaries

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee’s pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the [council] [relevant committee].

- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know.
 - b) by the internal auditor.
 - c) by the external auditor or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have been paid.
- 7.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.
- 7.7. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

8. Loans and investments

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. The council will arrange with the council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.

- 8.5. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.6. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. Income

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

10. Orders for work, goods and services

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

- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. Contracts

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services.
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes.
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant.
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council.
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council) and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
 - b) Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public

Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £30,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations².

- c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)³.
- d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders 18d and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £250 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.
- i) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j) Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the

² The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

³ Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts £189,330

b) For public works contracts 4,733,252

council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

12. Assets, properties and estates

- 12.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 12.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 12.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 12.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 12.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 12.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 12.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

13. Insurance

- 13.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the Clerk/RFO shall affect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.

- 13.2. The Clerk/RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 13.3. The Clerk/RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 13.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined [annually] by the council, or duly delegated committee.

14. Charities

- 14.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

15. Risk management

- 15.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk/RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 15.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk/RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

16. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 16.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 16.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.



BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Adopted Date – 14/09/20

Ref: 335.7.12(i)

Reviewed – 19/02/24

“The greatest risk facing a local authority is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected of the Council.”

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation’s ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus structures and processes standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.

Risk Policy Statement

Bleadon Parish Council hereafter referred to as BPC recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its Councillors assets liabilities and the community against potential losses to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise its opportunities. BPC is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and we have tried to ensure we have a strategy that provides a structured systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.

Approach to Risk Management

BPC’s approach to risk management is that we should try to identify and manage risks in the most cost effective manner within overall resources available. Each risk identified by BPC is recorded in BPC’s risk assessment document. The impact is assessed; control measures we feel to be appropriate are put in place together with the frequency with which the risk should be reviewed.

Responsibility for Risk Management

BPC recognises that it is the responsibility of all councillors and the clerk as an employee to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties. If uncontrolled risk can result in a drain on resources that could better be directed to front line service provision and to the meeting of HPC’s objectives and community needs. This policy has the full support of BPC which recognises that any reduction in the risk of injury, illness, loss or damage benefits the whole community. From recent experience, we already know that Council responsibility cannot be taken lightly and areas like succession planning are critical. The co-operation and commitment of all members of HPC and clerk as an employee is required to ensure that council resources are not wasted as a result of uncontrolled risk.

BPC is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.

This Policy and Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar

1. FINANCE				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to North Somerset Council Amount not received by North Somerset Council	L L L	The Council commences the review of the precept requirement annually in November by consideration of a first draft based on known income and expenditure as at the 30 th September. The presented budget will include actual position and projected position to year end and estimated figures for the next financial year. With this information the Council and that for the nine months as at the 31 st December then agrees the amounts set for the specific budget headings for the following year The final figures to be formally resolved at the January Council Meeting. the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from North Somerset Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer, in writing to North Somerset Council. The Clerk informs the Council when the precept has been received.	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. The Clerk receives training to ensure knowledge is up to date. The accounts system is automated to a high degree to reduce arithmetical mistakes. The Internal Auditor will visit twice a year. Regular reviews of income and expenditure will be provided to the members every quarter	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges Internet hacking FSCS limits exceeded	L L L L M H	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statements are received. Errors are communicated to the bank immediately. The Clerk reviews the Councils banking arrangements regularly. Internet Banking procedure established requiring two signatories for every transaction. Antivirus software on Clerk's and every signatory's device. FSCS covers deposits to £85k. When bank accounts exceed this amount the Clerk authorises a transfer of funds to an additional account.	Existing procedure adequate Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Bank signatories are reviewed at least annually and when personnel change. Bank statements checked monthly. Consideration to be given to diversifying bank accounts to reflect FSCS limits of cover
Reporting and Auditing	Information communication Compliance	L L	A budget monitoring statement is produced each month and provided for members for information purposes. A full list of payments and receipts and cheques to be signed is provided at the meeting and the financial records including a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank statement are presented and checked by a Councillor at each meeting.	Existing communication procedures adequate. Council appoint a Councillor to check financial records for Fidelity compliance
Invoices	Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect invoicing Errors in authorisation Unpaid invoices	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. Invoices are only submitted for approval once the Clerk has inspected the goods/services received. Cheques when used are presented to the signatories with the relevant invoice attached once checked as correct by Clerk. Scanned invoices are sent to signatories for online payments.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.

			A schedule of payments is produced for approval at each Council meeting and minuted accordingly.	
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L L	When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £250 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the HMRC. Incorrect overtime paid.	L L L L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees through a recruitment process. The Clerk keeps a record of hours worked and has a contract of employment and job description. Salary is based according to the national pay scales advised by SLCC and NALC. Salaries are paid by internet banking. The payroll service maybe outsourced. The Clerk prepares payments for authorisation by Signatories. Overtime is only paid for work approved by the Chair of the Personnel Committee.	
Councillor allowances / expenses	Councillors over-paid	L	The Chairman has a small budgeted annual allowance for a specific task. No allowances are allocated to other Parish Councillors. Any expenses are claimed by presenting the relevant receipt to the Council for approval. Expenses are monitored to ensure the budget is not exceeded and expenditure reported monthly to the Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Election costs	Unexpected election cost	L	Sufficient monies in reserve are budgeted to be available should the need arise.	Reviewed in the budget
VAT	Failure to reclaim	L	The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements and the clerk adopts a system to diarise tasks. The electronic accounts system works out VAT for the quarterly reclaim.	Existing procedures adequate.
Annual return	Not submitted within time limits Not published in compliance with regulation	M	Year-end accounts are submitted to the Internal Auditor then approved by the Council. The Annual Return is completed in accordance with the regulations and sent to the External Auditor within the time limit. Dates for deadline are stated by auditor. Accounts are published as stated on auditor notices.	.Existing procedure adequate.

Grants payable	No power to pay or authorisation of Council to pay	L	The Council has a Grant Funding Policy that sets out the requirements. All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval and is minuted. Any grants awarded have the terms and conditions satisfied before money is released.	Existing procedure adequate.
Grants receivable	Incorrect amount received or paid in	L	Grants received are paid via online banking and recorded in the electronic accounts system.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges/rentals payable	Non-payments of leases/rentals	L	The Clerk monitors payments and reports to the Council meetings.	Existing procedure adequate.
Charges/rentals receivable	Youth Centre rent not received Allotment rents not received. Adverting revenue not received	L	Clerk undertakes credit control. Allotment holders invoiced in August for the year commencing 29 September. Youth Centre defaults on the lease if not paid.	Existing procedure adequate. Review agreement and fees annually.

2. MANAGEMENT				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to unexpected circumstances	M	The Councils everyday working files are kept online by way of a remote cloud system. Necessary paper records are retained in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy as well as on the Council's Website. The Clerk makes regular back-ups of files to an external hard drive. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed a locum will be arranged Alternative meeting rooms are available in the village A communication plan has been developed	Existing procedures to be reviewed.
Employees	Loss of key personnel Fraud by staff Unlawful action taken by staff Breach of Health and Safety	M L L M	Proactive management to ensure that employees are well motivated and respected. Contingency arrangements and funding in place to provide adequate cover in the event of employee absence Policies are in place to address staff grievances. The Personnel Committee undertakes six-monthly appraisals. All appropriate employees of the council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance in accordance with the Financial Regulations All employees are made aware of their responsibilities for health and safety through their contract, H&S policy and training as required. The Clerk will be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. Regular contact with Chairman and members of the Personnel Committee	Existing procedure adequate. Chair of the Personnel Committee to maintain regular contact. Monitor working condition safety requirements and insurance regularly. Statutorily satisfactory Insurance policy. Training provided.

Legal powers	Illegal or unlawful activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings.	All activities and payments minuted.
Council records - paper	Loss through theft, fire or damage	L L L	The Councils everyday working files are kept online by way of a remote cloud system. Necessary paper records are retained in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy as well as on the Council's Website in a locked cabinet which is currently stored in the Coronation/Jubilee Halls, The Clerk's home office will be a private dedicated room and appropriate insurance arranged.	Existing procedure adequate.
Council records - electronic	Loss through theft, fire or damage Corruption or loss of laptop	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on a Council computer at the Clerk's home. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals to an external hard drive. Clerk's laptop is routinely backed up to a separate (additional) external hard drive. New laptop/updated software to be secured at least five-yearly.	Existing procedure adequate. Although the Clerk works on a remote system it is centrally backed up regularly throughout the day at an off site Update of IT (hardware and software) for Clerk and councillors to be undertaken in 2024
Insurance	Inadequate cover Expensive policy Lack of compliance Fidelity Guarantee compromised	L L L L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Ensure that the asset register is up to date Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Asset Registered currently under review. Insurance Policy reviewed Annually
Data protection GDPR	Policy Provision Non-compliance with GDPR	L L M	Data Protection requirements stated in the Council's Standing Orders. Ensure that Employees and Councillors receive training Retain NSC Information Governance service	Existing procedure adequate. Provide training where necessary
Freedom of Information Act	Failure to recognise requests. Failure to comply adequately.	L L	NSC Information Governance Service assists with FoI requests.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act
Meeting location	Inadequate Breach of Health & Safety	L L	The Parish Council Meetings are held at the Coronation Hall/Church Rooms/Youth Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspects. The venues are insured and risk assessed.	Existing location adequate.

3. ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	M	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. The Parish Council has arrangements in place to check and maintain assets. Weekly visual play area inspections carried out by the Ranger and documented. Quarterly Operational Inspections of Play Area equipment made by GB Sport. Annual inspection carried out by registered play inspection company RoSPA.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance requirements annually.
Noticeboards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety Need for replacement	L L L L	Parish Council has five notice boards sited around the Parish. All locations have approval by relevant parties and insurance cover is in place. Noticeboards are inspected regularly. A budget has been established to repair/replace noticeboards.	

4. LIABILITY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments Working Parties taking decisions	L L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council (not ultra vires) and to be resolved and clearly minuted. Ensure Working Parties understand that only the Parish Council can make decisions	Existing procedures adequate.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Inaccurate minutes Unlawful actions Public notice not given sufficient notice Missing documents Business not conducted correctly	L L L L L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk according to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements, on noticeboards and Parish Council website. Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chair and advised by the Clerk	Agendas & Minutes to be regularly posted on to the Council's Website Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L L	Insurance is in place. Risk assessments regularly carried out to comply with requirements if necessary.	Existing procedures adequate.

Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	Insurance is in place. Undertake adequate training and seek advice from the Association of Local Councils.	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Liability	Lack of clarity of legality of activities Inaccurate reporting via Minutes Lack of document control	L L L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Parish Council always receives and approves Minutes at monthly meetings. Retention of document policy in place.	Existing procedures adequate.

4. COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members interests	Conflict of interest not declared Register of Members interests	M M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of the meeting, reminder on the agenda .However it is not the responsibility of members or the Clerk to cajole the member with a potential interest to actually declare one. It is the sole responsibility of the councillor concerned. Register of Members Interest forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Check understanding of requirements, as new councillors in place. Members to take responsibility themselves to update the Register.

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS - 2024/25

All meetings take place in the Coronation Hall except where stated

Monday 11 th March 2024 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 8 th April 2024 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 29 th April 2024 7.30pm	Annual Meeting of Electors
Monday 13 th May 2024 7.30pm	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (AMPC)
Monday 10 th June 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 8 th July 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 12 th August 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 9 th September 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 14 th October 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 11 th November 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 9 th December 2024 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 13 th January 2025 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 10 th February 2025 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 10 th March 2025 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 14 th April 2025 at 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Monday 28 th April 2025 at 7.30pm	Annual Meeting of Electors
Monday 12 th May 2025 at 7.30pm	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (AMPC)

The agenda and associated paperwork is generally available the Wednesday before a Monday meeting and can be found on our website www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk or a hard copy is available by contacting the Parish Clerk using the details above.