
MEETING OF FULL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 17th JULY 2023 AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present : Cllrs Norcross (Chairman), Young, Bell, Hanson, S. Alexander, Sharp, Foxwell, Ballance, Johnson, Trundle, I. Alexander, M. Alexander & Linfield.

Clerks in attendance : John Fullbrook

Members of the Public : 2 {inc. District Cllrs V Finnegan & N Marks}

Meeting commenced : 7.34 pm

DRAFT MINUTES

ACTION

FULL/23/32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

32.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Campbell, and Lloyd.

FULL/23/33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

33.1 None

FULL/23/34 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

34.1 None

FULL/23/35 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Young that the minutes for the meeting dated the 19th June '23 be accepted as a true and fair record. **Agreed**
35.1 **11 For, 2 Abstained**

FULL/23/36 MATTERS ARISING – These items were taken as read

36.1 Cllr Finnegan to pass on Virgin Media contact details to Clerk – **Actioned**

36.2 Cllr Finnegan to report back to SPC regarding Q's about Parking charges and EV Charging
– **See item 37.1**

36.3 Clerk to contact police about 'Shop Watch' – **Actioned / See item 42.5**

36.4 SPC AGAR for 2022/23 signed and sent to external auditors – **Actioned**

36.5 Notice of public rights and 22/23 AGAR published – **Actioned**

36.6 SDNPA ballet paper completed and sent off - **Actioned**

36.7 Community Committee membership and associated admin updated - **Actioned**

36.8 Community Committee Vice Chair admin updated - **Actioned**

FULL/23/37 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

- 37.1.1 Cllr Victoria Finnegan – (HDC) update – Item 1. – EV Chargers.** Following a meeting with HDC officer, to confirm the chargers are going to be ‘quick’ not ‘rapid’, the position for installation is dictated by the supply and load. The Fletchers Croft installation was completed as per HDC plans, and into positions which were most feasible. – Members voiced their displeasure at how the process had been undertaken with their views appearing to be largely ignored
- 37.1.2 2. Parking** – Cllr Linehan and HDC Parking officers looking at amending parking regime on High Street and Fletchers Croft – early discussions taking place – SPC Members asked that the Council be part of these discussions please
- 37.1.3 3. Surveys** - There are a number of questionnaires out at the moment from HDC – most noted under item 42
- 37.1.4 4. Local Plan** – Remaining a top priority at HDC
- 37.1.5 5. Ivy at High Street Car Park** - impinging on parking bays and Charlton Street, but to be cut back before September
- 37.2 Cllr Nicholas Marks** – Echoed the points from Cllr Finnegan’s report and also mentioned that they had both been involved in holding surgeries at the Farmers Market and that the SPC councillors were welcome to join them in the future, in what had been so far some very positive sessions.

FULL/23/38 NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS REPORT

- 38.1** To receive the Neighbourhood Wardens reports for June 2023 – Cllr Ballance pointed out a recent local issue he was aware of involving probable drug dealing, and he felt that this was symptomatic of the continuing ASB problems.

FULL/23/39 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

- 39.1 Cllr Linfield, S. Alexander, and the Clerk updated on Joint Parishes Youth Committee -** Following the news that SCYP was to cease trading. Progress had been made on an outline Business Plan, should the service provision be agreed to be taken ‘in house’, plus meetings with HDC representatives to see if a solution could be found. The Clerks office had also been in contact with other councils who had received the same news and were facing similar choices while attempting to move their own youth service provisions on, plus the clerk’s office had contacted other parishes who had already taken their service in-house to see what information, and advice might be forthcoming, and to see if there was a possibility of a ‘buy in’ to other service provision with either those Parishes or other organisations operating throughout the region, and especially more locally. The JPYC will continue to meet regularly and work on behalf of the Council to ensure some level of Youth Service will be in place as soon as possible, and also that there will be continued efforts to attempt to recoup lost funds paid to the previous contractor. **CLERK**
- 39.2 Cllrs Young and M. Alexander – Isolation and loneliness / PPG update** – Vintage Years group doing very well, as currently running at near capacity.

FULL/23/40 GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY MATTERS

- 40.1 To discuss making Steyning a ‘Dementia Friendly Town’** – The Chair spoke in support of SPC registering as a dementia friendly town. The idea being that the council becomes instrumental in encouraging all businesses and groups operating in Steyning, to factor in dementia into everything they do, whilst ensuring that resources and training are made available to all those organisations actively taking part. There was general agreement to move this forward and the Chair suggested she complete more research for the next Full Council meeting so that it could be discussed further. **Cllr Norcross**

- 40.2 Hoey – Ains SPC Implementation Plan update** - Following SPC agreeing the 6-month plan update, this document was sent into the monitoring office for it to be reported to the HDC Standards Committee in June – but that was postponed. They are now reporting it to the Standards Committee on the 26th of July, and their report will be published a week or so before that meeting.
- 40.3 To report progress from the All Member Working Party, which is considering projects for this council's term** – This working party was convened on the 19th of June following the main SPC Full Council Meeting with the aim being to begin to prioritise a draft list of projects. Members had been supplied with a long list of project requests and it was felt that to make prioritisation easier, it would be best to group the projects into, and under, specific headings. The clerk therefore compiled a 'SPC Potential Projects Matrix' {supporting paper} arising from this request, and this was distributed to all members. With it, Cllr Simon Alexander was asked to set up the council's very own 'survey monkey' which Councillors could use to prioritise each of the groups to their own liking, as well as a chance to attempt to prioritise the entire project list. SPC also asked members of the public to contribute to a fuller list of objectives by writing in with their own project requests. A second convening of this working party will happen directly after this current Full Council with the aim of agreeing the projects for the first year. **CLERK**
- FULL/23/41 COMMITTEE MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 41.1 Community Committee** – Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Hanson that SPC receives the Minutes and Draft Minutes from the Community Committee meetings held on the 6th of June '23, and the 4th July '23. **Agreed**
- 41.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee** – Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S. Alexander that SPC receives the Minutes of the F&GP meeting held on the 13th June '23. **Agreed**
- 41.3 Planning and Premises Committee** – Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Johnson that SPC receive the Planning and Premises Minutes and Draft Minutes of the meetings held on the 24th April '23, 22nd May '23 and 26th June '23. **Agreed**
- FULL/23/42 PROGRESS REPORT - ONGOING ITEMS**
- To receive the following ongoing items**
- 42.1** *Clerk to bring back External Auditors progress on signing off 21/22 AGAR* **CLERK**
- 42.2** *To convene Working Practices Group to discuss Amended SPC Policies and new proposed SPC Policy.* **CLERK**
- 42.3** *Clerk to discuss any new S106 funding opportunities with HDC* **CLERK**
- 42.4** *Council to complete actions as per the agreed implementation plan {Hoey Ainscough Report}* **CLERK**
- 42.5** *SPC to work with Steyning Business Chamber to set up Disc reporting system for High Street retailers. The Clerk meeting with Chair of Business Chamber on the 20th of July* **CLERK**
- 42.6** *Three items for Cllr Linehan to update on at next SPC Full Council meeting; regards Virgin media installation, outstanding highways scheme application and local water resources.* **CLERK**
- 42.7** *SPC Bank signatories Ex Councillors to be removed from listings* **CLERK**
- FULL/23/43 CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION ITEMS** **CLERK**
- 43.1 WSCC consultation promotion for Local Voluntary Carers** – A survey to assess and support adult unpaid family and friend carers. – Closing date 27th Jul. See SPC web site for details

43.2 **Climate Action Survey promotion from HDC** – HDC have produced a draft Climate Action Strategy to help the district towards becoming carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2050. To ensure it is prioritised in the right way, HDC wants feedback from those who live and work in Horsham District – The Survey runs until 31 August – See SPC web site for details

43.3 **Adur River Landscape Recovery Project Survey from HDC** – This is a two-year project focused on the river Adur, from the estuary up to Knepp. It is one of 22 projects across the country that is being funded by the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, with 27 local farmers involved. HDC need to know how local people use the river as a resource – Survey responses by the 10th of August. See SPC web site for details

FULL/23/44 **DATE OF NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING: 18th September 2023 at 7.30pm**

Meeting closed at 8.31 pm

Signed Date 18th September 2023
Chairman

A video recording of this meeting is available at - <https://youtu.be/f1yIMSY5heg>

Warden Monthly Report

STEYNING, BRAMBER AND UPPER BEEDING

JULY 2023

Hi vis Patrol hours TOTAL:	74	ASB incidents TOTAL:	5
Foot - Steyning/Bramber/Upper Beeding	23/6/17	Noise	2
Vehicle - Steyning/Bramber/Upper Beeding	14/4/10	Neighbours	2
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	5	Driving/vehicles	1
Verbal warning	3	Bicycles	0
Parking alert	2	Alcohol	0
Yellow card warning (ASB)	0		
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0		
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	5
Reports into Police TOTAL:	4	Fly tipping / flyposting	3
Phone (including 101 and 999)	0	Graffiti	0
Online	0	Dog fouling	1
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
Verbal	4	Drug litter	0
E-CINS (multi-agency reporting)	0	Hazards	1
Media Reports TOTAL:			
Press release/Community magazines			
Social media posts	2	Community events attended	1
Admin, Training, Meetings & Events	58	School contact	1
Vulnerable people welfare checks	1	Youth engagement	20
Signposting	6	Reports to DVLA	1
Safeguarding referral	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	1

ASB crime

We were alerted to criminal damage caused by a ball bearing smashing a window in Shooting Field, the suspicion is that this was caused by a young person using a slingshot.

A resident contacted to alert us that a small quad bike was being used on the school field at Shooting Field. Info passed to Police.

Visit and incident diary given to a resident in Steyning in relation to persistent noise nuisance.

Parking/vehicles

We spoke with a resident using a mobility scooter that was unable to use a dropped kerb due to a vehicle being parked in front of it. We asked for the vehicle to be moved so that the dropped kerb was no longer obstructed.

A resident contacted us regarding a person parking in a residential bay that did not live in the adjoining property. We made some enquiries on behalf of the resident as enforcing this lies outside of our powers. Horsham District Councils Parking Team informed us that the "residents parking only" signs had not been put up by HDC and as such are not enforceable by their teams. We passed contact details onto the resident to discuss the issue further and to try and reach an amicable solution.

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We came across the following items that had been fly tipped and reported or arranged for their removal:

- Mattress – Shooting Field

We received a call relating to potential tipping in Upper Beeding, but it turned out to be garden waste awaiting collection.

We were contacted by a resident regarding overflowing household waste bins of a neighbour. We contacted the Horsham District Council waste team for advice on how to proceed and knocked on the resident's door to speak with them but unfortunately, no one was home.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We have organised a small event for families to attend on 26th August, this will be at Cuthmans Field and will run from 12-3. Posters are up around the three parishes.

We assisted the Love Parks event held at the Steyning Centre and engaged with many local residents.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

Continued patrols of regular ASB Hotspots across the Three Parishes.

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We held our social club at Dingemans and hosted quizzes which were very popular with those that attended. The number of participants that are attending is starting to increase which is lovely to see and helps to build community spirit amongst the residents.

We received a report of a person that had been living in their car for about a month. We patrolled the area to carry out a welfare check and make any referrals that may be necessary but were unable to locate the car or the vulnerable person.

Several youth engagements with groups frequenting ASB hotspots such as the Basketball court MPF Steyning and the bandstand Upper Beeding Rec.

Dog related issues

The cricket club have brought to our attention the amount of dog fouling that is happening in the mornings on the Memorial Playing Fields and cricket pitch. We will be arranging an early patrol to try and identify who is responsible and take action as necessary.

Cycling

None

Parish specific/other

We delivered a diary to a resident that had previously reported a noise complaint so that a record can be kept and sent to the Environmental Health team to deal with the issue.

Warden Monthly Report

STEYNING, BRAMBER AND UPPER BEEDING

AUGUST 2023

Hi vis Patrol hours TOTAL:	80	ASB incidents TOTAL:	3
Foot - Steyning/Bramber/Upper Beeding	18/6/14	Noise	0
Vehicle - Steyning/Bramber/Upper Beeding	20/5/17	Neighbours	0
Notices/warnings TOTAL:	2	Driving/vehicles	2
Verbal warning	1	Bicycles	1
Parking alert	1	Alcohol	0
Yellow card warning (ASB)	0		
Community Protection Warning/Notice	0		
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	8
Reports into Police TOTAL:	1	Fly tipping / flyposting	2
Phone (including 101 and 999)	0	Graffiti	0
Online	1	Dog fouling	0
Intelligence report	0	Litter	0
Verbal	0	Drug litter	0
E-CINS (multi-agency reporting)	0	Hazards	6
Media Reports TOTAL:	7		
Press release/Community magazines	0		
Social media posts	7	Community events attended	2
Admin, Training, Meetings & Events	40	School contact	0
Vulnerable people welfare checks	5	Youth engagement	3
Signposting	5	Reports to DVLA	0
Safeguarding referral	0	Reports to Operation Crackdown	1

ASB crime

Steyning

We were made aware of damage caused to a greenhouse roof. Unfortunately, the residents did not see the incident happen so were unable to identify those responsible. We advised the incident to be reported to the police who are able to deal with criminal damage.

While on patrol we received a report that a resident's neighbour had had ball bearings shot into their house. We found out the address and visited to check they were ok and to signpost the resident to report the incident to the police.

We received more details of young people climbing up onto one of the roofs on the high street. We advised this be reported to the police, as they had not received any reports when we asked if there were any updates.

We carried out a welfare check of a shop owner that we heard had been intimidated. We encouraged them to report to Sussex police on the website. It is really important that this type of incident is reported as this behaviour is unacceptable, but the police cannot act if they do not have an official report come through their systems.

We have been told that a group of young people had stolen alcohol from the Co-Op and had been drinking in the bus shelter. We checked with the Co-Op and were able to look at the CCTV but unfortunately were unable to identify the young people involved.

We received a report of people using drugs and cycling in the Memorial Gardens. Unfortunately, this was on a day that we were not on shift. We informed the resident to report drug use directly to the police as they are able to take

further action if needed. We have noted the time and will add it to our patrols to deter the behaviour if it happens again.

Bramber

None to report.

Upper Beeding

None to report.

[Parking/vehicles](#)

Steypning

A car had been parked in an obstructive manner which meant that a delivery van was unable to pass on Charlton Street. A parking alert was left on the car and an Operation Crackdown report made to address the obstructive parking. We spoke with a resident who unfortunately said that this is a frequent occurrence. We have spoken with the Horsham District Council (HDC) Civil Enforcement Officers (Parking enforcement team) to make them aware of the problems being caused due to parking on the double yellow lines on this narrow road.

Bramber

None to report.

Upper Beeding

There is a car that has been abandoned on Beeding Hill and has been there for some time, the police are aware. The car has been vandalised. We made some enquiries to find out if there are any updates on the car and what the plan is.

[Fly tipping/littering/graffiti](#)

Steypning

Flytipping was found in a layby on Titch Hill. Rubble and a corex sheet had been dumped in amongst the tree line. This was reported to HDC for removal.

Bramber

A large tractor tyre and rubbish had been left in the Bramber Castle car park. We reported this to English Heritage to make them aware and to remove the items.

Upper Beeding

None to report

[Community engagement/events/meetings](#)

We attended the Neighbourhood Warden Full Team meeting where we received training on a new DISC system that is being used in shops to help encourage crimes to be reported to the police.

Steypning

We dropped into the Wednesday morning coffee club at the Penfold Hall. The club is well attended, and we were able to speak with local residents to introduce ourselves and to see if there was anything we can help them with. One resident asked about volunteering opportunities which we will help to pass onto them.

We spoke with Saxon Weald to discuss a project that we are hoping to work on where we will turn an unused room in Dingemans Court into a games room for the residents.

We held a free Community Fun Day that was open to all SBUB residents at Fletcher's Croft. Free sports activities, bouncy castle and soft play was available. The fire crew brought a fire engine and the local PCSO brought a police

car and was carrying out engagement with the local residents. We had residents asking about our role and we handed out free cupcakes and cookies that had been made and donated by a local resident. We were joined by the Dairy Diva to sell ice-cream and the Co-Op donated water for the event. Despite the bad weather, it was well attended with 70-80 people coming to the event across the 3 hours.



Bramber

None to report.

Upper Beeding

We spoke with the people that organise the Skate Jam events and are currently fundraising for the Small Dole skate park. They have nearly reached their target to update one half of the skate park and are doing a lot of work behind the scenes to make it a great place for people to visit.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

Steyning

- High Street
- Bus Shelter
- Cobblestone Walk
- MPF

Bramber

- Bramber Castle

Upper Beeding

- Playing field
- Small dole skate park
- Beeding Hill/Truleigh Hill

Older, vulnerable people and youth

We had a meeting with an officer from the Alzheimer's Society to see how we can work together to support the outreach work that they are already carrying out. Our knowledge of the local clubs and groups will be useful to pass on for the Alzheimer's Society to carry out proactive engagement work. This was also a good opportunity to introduce ourselves so that we can be made aware of any vulnerable people in the community that we need to be aware of that they are working with.

Steyning

We spoke with a small group of young people along Shooting Field. This was the first time that we had seen this group and managed to build a good rapport with them should we see them again. Later on in the month we saw members of this group in the bus shelter trying to escape the rain. They were happy to speak with us.

We spoke with a group of young people that were sitting at the bus shelter. They were all just playing games on their phones.

We have hosted 2 more social clubs at Dingemans which are proving popular amongst the residents.

We have received 2 separate reports of a person sleeping in a car. We were able to find this person and carried out a welfare check. We introduced ourselves and will check in on their welfare when we see them.

Bramber

None to report.

Upper Beeding

None to report.

Dog related issues

Steyning

We spoke with two dog owners that did not have full control of their dog while it was off lead. We saw it approach other dogs that were being kept on a lead in a boisterous manner and the recall was not effective. There was no harm done but we spoke to the owners about the dangers of not having a good recall and they had already planned to see a dog trainer to help them keep their dog and others safe.

A resident contacted us as they had been told their dogs were going to be reported to the RSPCA as they had been mistaken for a banned breed. The resident was concerned what this might mean for their dogs. This is not our area of expertise, but we were able to talk through the problem with the resident. We also spoke with the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for the area to make them aware of the situation, they had not received any reports of the dogs.

Bramber

None to report.

Upper Beeding

None to report.

Cycling

Steyning and Bramber

On separate occasions, two residents have spoken with us regarding their concern over the safety of cyclists on some of the narrow, windy, country roads in Steyning. We have contacted West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to see if it is possible to display warning of cyclists' signs on Kings Barns Lane (Steyning) and Castle Lane (Bramber).

Upper Beeding

None to report.

Parish specific/other

Steyning

A visitor to the town had fallen at the Memorial Playing Field, we were on patrol and were called over to assist. We were able to help the gentleman to a chair. He thought he may have injured his ribs but was ok when he got back to his feet. We passed on advice to call 111 or his GP if the pain worsened.

The road surface is badly cracked by the Reads Walk bus stop. This was reported to WSCC for a repair to be made.

Bramber



We received a report of overgrown vegetation on Castle Lane making it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to pass when traffic is driving along the road. We have submitted a report to WSCC as the road is very narrow.

We reported a damaged post to the WSCC Highways team to be repaired.

Upper Beeding

We were on a patrol of some sites where fly-tipping can appear when we spotted a few paragliders making the most of the lovely weather.



Considering Projects for this Council's term

Item 8.1

Briefing Note

Since the beginning of this current Council's term, there has been a consensus on attempting to prioritise what members want to achieve over the next four years in office. Aims, ideas and projects have been discussed inside and outside the council chamber, discussed in committee meetings, and notably within the two all-member working parties.

There has been, and continues to be, a huge number of ideas both from members and from residents thanks to our 'call for projects' via various promotions including the comments box at the Steyning Centre and the request publicised within latest edition of 'Your Steyning'.

Though we expect ideas to still trickle in, we have had to come to an initial agreement for 'Year One', and at the F&GP meeting on the 12th of September a revised SPC Business Plan and then a new SPC Action Plan for the 2023/24 year has been agreed. This is a 'live document' and is attached as supporting paper 8.1.2.

While continuing to welcome new ideas we now need to concentrate on two things please: -

1. Working collaboratively to ensure we do our best to complete the Year 1 Projects.
2. Begin to formulate priorities for next years Action Plan, so that we can think about what is required to achieve these aims – notably the finance to enable them to happen – in other words, budget setting and the associated consideration of the next precept application.

SPC Action Plan for 2023/24

Updated 13th September '23

Key: - **Green** - Completed, **Yellow** - Due, **Orange** - Overdue.

Project Name	Objectives	Task / Activity	Timescale	Task / Activity	Timescale	Task / Activity	Timescale	Task / Activity	Timescale	Task / Activity	Timescale	Responsibility	Risks to timescale	Mitigation to Risks
Youth Service Provision	Complete a Business Plan which enables the Youth Service to continue, after the loss of the previous provider	Compile first draft Business plan with previous providers assist.	By End July	Meet with potential provider partners & establish their commitments	By August	Agree draft Business plan with JPVC Com.	By Oct.	Unknown until Business plan agreed	?	Unknown until Business plan agreed	?	Clerk and JPVC Com.	There is an entire Business Plan to put together, then fact check, then agree, and then potentially appoint staff or new provider - many unknowns	Maintain close links with HDC so that administrative assistance available
Hedgerow Developments	Complete repairs and supplementary planting to Rublees hedges on western and eastern boundary.	Gain agreement from Community Com. for new hedgerow Scope and expenditure	By July	Take contractor round Allot. hedgerow to agree scope of Maint. Works	By Oct	Purchase plants for Hedgerows and find volunteers for planting	By Nov	Complete gap filling fencing at Rublees by contractor	By February	Complete Hedgerow planting programme	By April	Clerk & Community Com.	# - Finding Volunteers to assist # - Managing to purchase plants at the right time and keep them living until planted # - Organising prep of ground in right timescale	
MPF / Allotment Access	To upgrade the Access Points as appropriate and as funds allow	Complete remedial works to Southern Rublees entrance	By End June	Discuss draft plans for MPF entrance enhancements with working party	By End July	Draft and gain approval for Notice board ideas	By Nov	Gain approval for ent. Re-surfacing and planter ideas	By Jan	Complete plans for notice boards, planters and scope of works	By May 24	Clerk & Community Com.	# - Gaining permission for many different aspects at a number of meetings will take time. # - Proposals need agreement from Cricket Club	Keep Cricket club in the loop and ensure they are part of the process
Draft Part-Time Staff Contracts	Re-write using HR advice and technical assistance new contracts for the Steyning Centre part time employees	Compile two model draft contract options	By End June	Clerks to agree details of contract with ext. bodies to ensure compliant	By August	Clerk to gain support from Personnel for contracts	By End August	SPC to agree contracts with them then to be implemented	By Sept.	Clerks to agree through negotiations with staff, then contracts signed	By End Nov	Clerk and Personnel Com	Potential difficulties in terms of reaching agreement through negotiation with each staff member could take time	# - Legal compliance # - Keeping terms short whilst comprehensive # - Staff negotiations
High Street Christmas Lights	Install High Street lighting display to include agreeing new display, checking Lamp post integrity & all permissions	Agree display for Christmas 2023	By June	Seek permissions from WSCC & Electric suppliers	By End August	Agree date for Lamp post testing plus ID which posts	By Sept.	Complete all document permissions and agree install dates	By End Sept.	Complete installation	Before End of Nov.	Clerk and F & GP	There are many Contractors / Orgs. involved and if some in the chain of inter-dependant tasks are not easily compliant, then chain & timescale could breakdown	Start processes as early as possible
Tree Report and Essential Works	Health check tree report completed for year two remedials (Year II Tree Management completed already).	Clerk to check Tree report and plan works for remainder of year	By Oct	Clerk to complete Tree Management plan for Community approval	By End Oct.	Tree surgeon completes checks to MPF & Cripps Lane	By Nov.	Unknown until Tree surgeon report	?	Complete scope of works after gaining Community approval	?	Clerk / Community C.	The reports are obtained from a very busy tree surgeon whose report completion subsequent to site visits can be slow	Start processes as early as possible
Land Registry Works Undertaken	To bring up to date a more detailed understanding of SPC Land Assets	Attempt establishing time line for works to be completed with Solicitor	Previous Year	Establish and agree to convene F&GP working party for support	By End Sept.	Bring draft documents to working party for discussion & recommendations	By Dec	Agree documents for then Land register updates	By Feb '24	Agree Amended Land Register	By May '24	Clerk / F & GP	HM Land Registry department currently seems overwhelmed, understaffed & V. Slow. SPC Solicitors can also be somewhat slow to complete tasks.	
Clock Tower Maintenance	Agree scope of works with the owner, demarcation for scaffolding, timetabling & clock face renewal cont.	Agree contractor to undertake works.	By End of Nov.	Clerk to supply notes on historic scope of works & committee agree plan	By Dec.	Agree scope of works and timescale with owner	By Jan 24.	Agree financial commitment for part scaffold hire arrangements	By Feb 24.	Apply for permissions for work to be done & obtain timeframe	By End March '24	Clerk and F & GP	Main Building contractor could uncover more issues than originally thought or owner could renege on agreements	Maintain close contact with Clock Tower owner to ensure proactive scheme
Memorial Bench Installations	Memorial Bench installations (poss. 3) Requests to be processed, agreed & enhanced products installed.	Clerk obtains approval for first two projects to be completed	By End of June	Picnic Bench project completed	By End of June	Memorial Bench repurposing completed	By end July	Remove one delapidated bench from MPF & agree replacement cost	By End Dec	Complete installation of third Bench	Before End of March 24	Clerk / Community C.	Gaining permissions form committee on positioning of picnic bench	
Bus Shelter	Working with Schools or Local Art groups - come up with an artistic installation for the shelter interior	Obtain contacts and begin liason with key partners	By Nov	Come up with ideas for installation and discuss with stakeholders	By Dec.	Gain approval for ideas with committee	By Feb 24	Commission works & obtain ideas for appropriate installation protection	By April	Complete installation and official unveiling	By end May 24	Clerk / Community C.	A high profile project with likely opposing views & many ext. groups being involved suggest difficult resolution	Set up community engagement meeting with key stakeholders to gain views early
Steyning Nursery investment project	In collaboration with the previous Steyning Nursery manager , to agree a project that will best use funds available.	Check with ex Nursery manager that funds can still be accessed.	By End Oct	Come up with ideas that can be presented to Premises com.	By Dec.	Agree final scheme at Premises	By Feb 24	Order equipment and agree admin requirements	By March 24.	Complete purchases, intallation and associated admin processes	By May 24	Clerk's office, and Premises	To retrieve the funding will be tricky or perhaps impossible and will be the most difficult part of the project. Obtaining byin from Staff will be next difficult task.	Arrange meeting with main contact for ASAP to understand viability of project
CCTV	To agree CCTV monitoring installation for the Steyning High Street, and progress arrangements for MPF and Fletchers Croft	Set up Working party and agree initial scope of scheme	By July	Obtain first quote and discuss timeframe for project at working party	By end Sept.	Bring recommendation for agreement at Full Council for phase 1.	By Dec.	Complete community engagement and obtain necessary permissions	By end Feb	Complete phase 1 installation	By April 24	Clerk, working party , F. Council	Obtain agreements from both SPC and Residents on what could be a tricky subject for collaborative resolution	Promote positive engagemnt and ensure scheme is understood by wider community
Implementation Plan complete	Work through recommendations & complete to the satisfaction of HDC monitoring department.	Gain approval for 6 month progress report from SPC & HDC	By end June	Obtain collaborative agreement from all councillors on progress	By end July	Complete necessary policy amendments and have them agreed	By Sept.	Agree any processes which promote better 'language'	By Nov.	Complete 12 month progress report and gain approval from SPC and HDC	By Dec.	ALL	All parties need to be open to change and be willing to modify behaviours and work collaboratively	Ensure there is always a willingness to work towards a resolution
Chandlers Way Pocket Park	Work collaboratively with residents to set up volunteer group to implement agreed scheme and management plan	Set up first community engagement working party to discuss first thoughts on scheme	By July	Obtain if possible grant funding for the scheme or seek alternative finance	By August	Gain voluntary assist to discuss play area options & complete new planting plan	By end Sept.	Take play area options back to com volunteer group to seek recommendation	By Nov.	Gain approval from Committee for play area & initial planting scope of works	By Dec.	Clerk / Community C.	Project needs to meet with residents expectations whilst obtaining majority support, gain finance from an external source and requires patience	Keep positive comms with residents while ensuring they are part of the resolution
Upgrade Bins on High Street	Work with HDC to ensure bins on High street are restored, painted and fit for purpose	Complete installation of Recycling bin adjacent Bus shelter	By July	Gain agreement from HDC that they will complete restorative	By End July	Ensure phase 1 bin restoration works are to be completed by HDC before October	By Sept.	Ensure there is a phase 2 works expenditure agreed at HDC	By Nov.	Obtain date for completion of phase 2 works	By Feb '24	Clerk / Community C.	Unless SPC give up on waiting for HDC and decide to take on the cost of bin renovation, SPC will be entirely in the hands of HDC	Keep open, regular and collaborative channels in place with HDC contacts
T. R. O. select & submit application	Complete a Traffic Regulation Order project or small selection of them for the benefit of Steyning residents	Community Committee to agree what TRO's are to be submitted	By July	Clerk to work with Cllr Linehan to agree potential scope of works	By Oct.	TRO draft submission to be brought back to Community for approval	By Nov.	Application submission approved and sent to WSCC	By end Nov	Any scheme approvals to be scoped before end of financial year	Before End of 23	Clerk / Community C.	TRO submissions need to be reasonable and realistic otherwise that will be turned down - which will mean resident involvement which will add to information gathering timescale	Ask Cllr Linehan to work with us to speed processes up
Steyning Centre Audio-Vis. system	To enable better and more user freindly audio-visual service at the Steyning Centre	Work with SPC IT consultant and other contractors to provide options	By End of Sept.	Present recommendations and agree options	By end of Nov	Compile Scope of works & quotes	By End Jan	Agree final planned works	By Feb 24.	Install equipment as per agreed	By End April 24	Clerk's office & Premises Com.	There are many options to be considered. The best solution will not deal with all the issues, so the correct prioritisation for scope of works might take a while to agree	
Finger Post Install on the High Street	To install two finger posts to help promote visits to the Steyning memorial garden	Ensure permissions and Lamp post tests allow installation	By Dec	Agree costing	By Feb	Agree wording on Finger posts	By March	Purchase signs and consider other signage options	By April	Complete installation of Finger posts	Before End of May 24	Clerk and Community Com.	This is a new area of SPC service involvement, and SPC need to maintain restraint in terms of scope of achievement. Lamp post tests might be prohibitive	

Hoey–Ainscough Implementation Plan

Item 8.2

Briefing Note

A large part of this 18th September Full Council meeting is about updating and amending Policies to assist with the completion of the H-A Implementation Plan.

The 6-month review that was agreed by SPC (although disputed by one of its members) has been discussed and reviewed by the Standards Committee at its 26th July '23 meeting – the report for which is appended to this paper for your information.

It was further agreed by the monitoring office that subsequent to that 26th July meeting there would be 'a drawing of a line in the sand', so that subsequent to that meeting SPC could start anew and with positive convictions and intent and without a need to drag previous arguments back up.

The main point to raise from this item is that it is all important that all members to attempt to continue to maintain the highest possible standards and have in sharp focus the seven principles of public life as it strives to work collaboratively and for the greater good of its residents.

Report to Standards Committee

Wednesday 26th July 2023

By Lauren Kelly, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
& Monitoring Officer



**Horsham
District
Council**

DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt

Steyping Parish Council

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to (i) update the Standards Committee in relation to the difficulties which have existed at Steyping Parish Council for several years, and (ii) agree an approach to deal with Steyping Parish Council.

These difficulties have been reported to the Standards Committee previously.

Accordingly, the Monitoring Officer requests that the Standards Committee considers the content of this report and approves the recommendations detailed herein.

Recommendations

That the Standards Committee is recommended to:

- i) Approve that the Monitoring Officer and Standards Team continue to support Steyping Parish Council in implementing its plan to tackle issues, which was recommended by the Hoey & Ainscough intervention; and
- ii) Approve that all outstanding code of conduct complaints are considered dealt with and completed by way of informal resolution under the Hoey & Ainscough intervention; and
- iii) Approve that any new code of conduct complaints received after 26 July 2023 are considered by either the Monitoring Officer or a Deputy Monitoring Officer and/or a Standards Sub Committee in consultation with the Independent Person to assess the merits and seriousness of any alleged code breaches. If (i) the facts and evidence demonstrate that a formal investigation is warranted, and (ii) it is in the public interest, the complaints will be referred for formal investigation and determination. If appropriate, sanctions will be recommended, and Decision Notices will be published.

Reasons for recommendations

- i) To support Steyning Parish Council in improving relationships between the parish councillors generally and the Clerk's office;
- ii) To assist Steyning Parish Council with its ongoing plan to tackle issues as recommended by the Hoey & Ainscough intervention;
- iii) To help councillors not to dwell on the past and to look forward so that behaviours improve restoring harmony and good positive working relationships at Steyning Parish Council. This, in turn, will ensure that Horsham District Council's financial and other resources are utilised efficiently and effectively so that the Council has the capacity to offer assistance to other parish councils too;
- iv) To ensure the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct amongst members throughout the district.

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011, Chapter 7.

The Code of Conduct and the Council's arrangements for dealing with code of conduct complaints.

Previous reports regarding Steyning Parish Council can be viewed at the following links:

Report to Standards Committee – 16/03/2022

Agenda item 6, pages 11 to 20:

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g1957/Public%20reports%20pack%2016th-Mar-2022%2010.00%20Standards%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Report to Standards Committee – 30/11/2022

Agenda item 6, pages 15 to 56:

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2232/Public%20reports%20pack%2030th-Nov-2022%2010.00%20Standards%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Report to Standards Committee – 15/03/2023

Agenda item 6, pages 7 to 12:

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2233/Public%20reports%20pack%2015th-Mar-2023%2010.00%20Standards%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Wards affected:

Steyning Parish Council & ALL

Contact: Lauren Kelly, Head of Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer
Lauren.Kelly@horsham.gov.uk Telephone 01403 215435

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 There have been previous reports to the Standards Committee regarding the difficulties at Steyning Parish Council. These reports can be viewed by accessing the relevant links detailed in the background papers.
- 1.2 Steyning Parish Council has experienced difficulties for many years. These difficulties extend to the relationships at Steyning Parish Council which result in code of conduct complaints. The code of conduct complaints are (i) made between parish councillors, (ii) brought by ex-councillors against parish councillors, (iii) lodged by members of the public against parish councillors.
- 1.3 Consequently, over the years, Steyning Parish Council has taken up a disproportionate amount of time of the Standards Team in dealing with numerous code of conduct complaints and other interconnected matters.
- 1.4 For example, Steyning Parish Council has accounted for 80% of all code of conduct complaints received in the financial year of 2021/2022 and 64% of all code of conduct complaints received in 2022/2023 and 58% of all code of conduct complaints in the first 3 months of this financial year. This totals 51 complaints in this two year and 3-month period and averages at 67% of the total of code of conduct complaints, when Steyning is just one parish out of 35 parish and neighbourhood Councils in the District.
- 1.5 As a result of these ongoing difficulties Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd (a consultant firm of Standards experts) was commissioned to (i) report on the failings present, and, (ii) make recommendations to improve, inter alia, relationships at Steyning Parish Council.
- 1.6 As such, an Implementation Plan (detailing the actions to put in place to help improve the situation at Steyning Parish Council) was drafted and adopted by Steyning Parish Council at its meeting on 21 November 2022. Steyning Parish Council committed to providing a progress report to Horsham District Council at six- and twelve-month intervals. Steyning Parish Council submitted the six-month progress report to the Standards Team on 17 May 2023.
- 1.6 Eight new Parish Councillors were elected to Steyning Parish Council following the May 2023 parish council elections.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The relevant statutory background is contained in Chapter 7 to the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Council's arrangements and process in dealing with code of conduct complaints can be viewed at the following link:

3 Details

- 3.1 The long history of problems and difficulties at Steyning Parish Council which has resulted in many code of conduct complaints over the years resulted in Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd independently reviewing, reporting and making recommendations for improvements.
- 3.2 The total cost to Horsham District Council of the Hoey Ainscough process was £13,680. The Hoey & Ainscough report detailed 36 recommendations and Steyning Parish Council devised an implementation plan to reflect these. At its Full Parish Council meeting on Monday 21 November 2022, it resolved “to take the actions and to implement the recommendations as detailed and to report on the progress in 6 months and 12 months to Steyning Parish Full Council meeting and to the Monitoring Officer at Horsham District Council”.
- 3.3 On 17 May 2023, following Steyning Parish Council’s meeting on the 15 May 2023, the Clerk submitted the “SPC Six-Month implementation review” (“the Review”). The Review, attached in Appendix A, details the original recommendations, action to be taken, by whom, and then a review of the actions.
- 3.4 It is believed that the Review was prepared largely before the May 2023 election. The Review is disputed, and the District Council Members of the Standards Committee has received representations in this connection.
- 3.5 The Clerk was authorised to submit the Review to the Monitoring Officer and was delegated responsibility to express the sentiment that Steyning Parish Council was very optimistic about the future and will continue to try to work together collaboratively for the greater good of Steyning.
- 3.6 The Clerk stated the above and elaborated that “there were many comments expressed during the discussion at their meeting on 15 May 2023 that are worthy of note. The main point is that following the May election it should be noted that 8 new councillors were elected to Steyning Parish Council, and at their first meeting it followed that many of the new councillors, and indeed many of those that had been re-elected, wanted to draw a line under previous issues, and as one councillor expressed it, concentrate on ‘forward looking behavioural based aspirations’. Indeed, it was a view from some that the plan and the Review was not entirely relevant anymore.”
- 3.7 The Monitoring Officer, the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person, viewed a recording of part of the first parish council meeting. They agreed that it was abundantly evident that there was a genuine desire by the vast majority of councillors to move on, draw a line and look forward rather than backwards. Further, it was noted that the new councillors had no desire or interest in considering past difficulties or no interest in siding with any previous faction. The new councillors appear to wish to work together collaboratively and positively for the benefit of the Steyning parish and its constituents.

- 3.8 Regrettably, however, the Standards Team continues to receive code of conduct complaints and allegations that some Councillors have not and will not change. The complainants contend that the only way there will be any change is if previous and outstanding code of complaints are formally investigated and determined.
- 3.9 Accordingly, the Monitoring Officer has continued to assess complaints with the independent person but has decided not to formally investigate any of these. Instead, it was thought appropriate to deal with these by way of informal resolution. As such, further meetings were recently convened with some of the relevant parties. These meetings were extremely positive and there was a clear desire to look forward and consider past difficulties as closed. These parties made commitments to behave appropriately and there is a general feeling that matters have improved markedly at Steyning, especially with the large influx of new Councillors.
- 3.10 Some complainants declined an invitation to meet with the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Independent Person and there has been repeated requests from some complainants that previous code of conduct complaints are formally investigated and determined. It is understood that Standards Committee members and on some occasions all Horsham District Councillors have received direct communications and representations regarding this.
- 3.11 After some years, however, it is clear that Steyning Parish Council may have now changed and be capable of change for the better. The Monitoring Officer believes that this is due to (i) the influx of new councillors with positive attitudes and little interest in past difficulties, and (ii) the commitments made by parties to continue to modify behaviours, act appropriately and disregard past difficulties and (iii) the benefits of implementing some of the recommendations detailed in the Hoey Ainscough report are beginning to become apparent. It is clear that the vast majority of the parish councillors wish to look forward and to undertake parish council work for the benefit of the parish, rather than dwell on the past.
- 3.12 Accordingly, the Monitoring Officer is presently firmly of the opinion that progress has been made at Steyning Parish Council and, as such, there would be no merit in delving into the past and instituting formal investigations into existing complaints. To do so could jeopardise, undermine and destabilise the new administration. As such, it is the belief that (i) the Standards Team should continue to support Steyning Parish Council, (ii) existing complaints should be closed, (iii) future complaints should be assessed in the usual way and formally investigated if warranted and if in the public interest to do so, and, (iv) the Standards Team continues to monitor Steyning Parish Council.
- 3.13 The Monitoring Officer is aware that not all parish councillors will be content with the recommendations contained in this report. Any councillors have the right to refer their individual complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Standards Committee is asked to approve the recommendations.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The views of any Policy Development Advisory Groups have not been sought.
- 5.2 The views of the Independent Person have been sought in relation to the content and recommendations contained in this report. The Independent Person expressed strong support for the proposals contained herein.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 To formally investigate and determine existing outstanding complaints. It is thought that this option could serve to sour relationships at Steyning Parish Council given (i) the new administration, and (ii) that there is a commitment to working in a positive and collaborative manner. Therefore, this option was rejected.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are cost implications in formally investigating and determining the code of conduct complaints pertaining to Steyning Parish Council. The total cost will depend on the number and the detail of the complaints received.
- 7.2 It is hoped, therefore, that further training and implementing the recommendations and providing ongoing support assistance and interventions will improve future relations, and ongoing complaints therefore reduce, leading to less resource and financials implications for the Legal Department.

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. In addition, it must have arrangements in place to deal effectively with conduct of conduct complaints. Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 refers.
- 8.2 Horsham District Council's Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure allows the Monitoring Officer to (i) employ an alternative means of resolution, and (ii) not take further action.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There exists a risk of challenge in deciding not to investigate and determine individual code of conduct complaints. That said, the recommendations contained in this report are justified and considered appropriate and more likely to improve the relationships at Steyning Parish Council.

10 Procurement implications

- 10.1 There are no procurement implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.1 There are no such implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

13 Other Considerations

- 13.1 There are no GDPR, Data Protection or Crime & Disorder consequences arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

	Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions				
R1	As a priority the Council should sign up to the NALC/SLCC Civility and Respect Pledge.	All Cllrs sign up and agree to abide by the pledge at a Full Council Meeting	SPC	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE Council (as a body corporate) is signed up But 4 Cllrs are refusing to take the pledge
R2	In doing so the Council should collectively agree what language is and is not appropriate in meetings and correspondence among councillors and with officers, how such language should be challenged in meetings and how meetings can be run more efficiently without getting bogged down in minutiae nor stifling legitimate debate. Behaviour needs to be re-set to improve relationships to allow Council business to be transacted.	Agreement on Language can be made via Working Practices WP The tone of the emails is a more difficult issue to deal with – as to how – at present this is unresolved – in the first instance this should be self-regulated by Clerk and then by majority rule from the Council if needs be.	Working Practices Then agreed at Full Council Clerk to regulate in first instance – emails. Chairs to challenge Cllrs in - meetings. Council to agree or otherwise	PART COMPLETE, MAINLY THROUGH NONCOLLABORATION BY CLLRS Council is agreeing to new policies and a new agreement as to language used in correspondence and meetings stems from this. Unfortunately, those councillors who in the main are not being respectful, it seems continue not to see that their behaviour is poor, and are not agreeing to the policy amendments and therefore it appears an improvement 're-set' is unlikely.
R3	In agreeing to the Pledge, all councillors should give an undertaking to treat fellow councillors and officers with respect and not to make personal attacks on individuals or their integrity. Until such respect is shown the Council cannot move forward	Behaviour needs to be modified by first taking the pledge. If some individuals do not understand that they are causing offence, then hopefully they will respect other Cllrs and the clerks' comments and not continue to argue their position.	Cllrs All Cllrs have to work together to assist with a higher level of understanding	PART COMPLETE, MAINLY THROUGH NONCOLLABORATION BY CLLRS Those councillors who have agreed to the pledge have also agreed to treat fellow councillors and officers with respect. Those 4 councillors who have not agreed to the pledge have also not agreed to that undertaking.
R4	All councillors should undertake that, where they have concerns about the way a decision has been made or a procedure followed, they should discuss this respectfully with the Clerk and the Clerk should be allowed to give a ruling with reasons such as a reference to existing policy or legislation as to whether or not the concern is legitimate. This ruling should be communicated to all councillors. Where the concern is legitimate such, a ruling should include the steps needed either to rectify the matter with an agreed timescale or the changes needed to prevent the matter re-occurring. Where the majority of councillors accept that the concern has been dealt with, the matter cannot be raised again for six months in line with Standing Orders.	Cllrs to follow the guidance not only of this recommendation and take care in how they raise issues, but then adhering to existing, and any amended, SPC policies, then await a response. The Clerk should respond as soon as reasonably practical or give reasons why not. Cllrs should abide by the response given. If the requester still has concerns, the matter is taken to all councillors and the majority ruling abided by.	Cllrs Clerk Cllrs Clerk and Cllrs	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE The Clerk has continued to point out when poor behaviour in meetings or via correspondence has occurred including breaches of policy, respect and good practice. However, the perpetrators do not accept his ruling, rather argue that they have the right to do what they like because they are representatives of the residents. Or they do not even engage in the process, that is, respond to the Clerk.

	Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions				
R5	All councillors who are unwilling to take, or abide by, the Pledge and modify their behaviour to improve internal relations should consider resigning with immediate effect for the greater good of the constituents of Steyning and Council business.	All Cllrs to take the pledge Some Cllrs to modify their behaviour	All Cllrs Cllrs	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE Those councillors unwilling to modify their behaviour and abide by the pledge seem unlikely to consider resignation, and there is nothing the council can do about it, and they know this.
R6	The Council should develop a comprehensive training and development strategy for the new Council which covers all areas of Council business. It should in particular include training on the Code of Conduct and appropriate standards of behaviour.	There is already a Training programme in place. There is a SPC Training 'Statement of intent' and both Cllrs and staff are offered opportunities to train from the moment they 'sign up'.	Cllrs and Clerk	COMPLETED The Council has a comprehensive training and development strategy and indeed is considering an amended policy at its next working practices group meeting which includes more emphasis on training on Code of Conduct and appropriate standards of behaviour
R7	The Council should develop an agreed understanding of the role and expectations for individual Cllrs when they are acting as Full Council members, as committee members, as individuals and as representatives of the Council externally.	Cllrs to re-read the information already provided and abide by Policies. Clerk to check Cllrs are aware where the information is and resend if necessary	Cllrs Clerk	PARTIALLY COMPLETED The Clerk has disseminated information about Roles and Responsibilities and in individual cases on occasion has specified where improvement is needed. This will again be reinforced when the new councillor induction packs are distributed and discussed. A Cllrs expectations will need to be addressed either in a closed all councillor session to discuss the strategic plan or via an external training session. - TBC
R8	That councillors are reminded that they cannot speak on behalf of the Council unless authorised by the Full Council to do so. Any correspondence from individual councillors needs to make this clear. Where an individual represents themselves as speaking on behalf of the Council, the Clerk should correct the record at the earliest opportunity.	Cllrs to re-read the information already provided and abide by Policies – with an amendment required to email policy to clarify position Clerk to check Cllrs are aware where the information is and resend if necessary	Cllrs Clerk	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE One councillor continues to correspond with outside bodies, and local groups and individuals as a councillor without delegated authority and often in opposition to the council's agreements or policies. The Councillor does not agree with the views of the Hoey report nor the Clerk.

	Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions				
R9	That councillors understand their fiduciary duties and vicarious liability and be reminded that they are all individually and severally liable for the finances and employment practices of the Council. Individual councillors should therefore be reminded that they should not act alone and unilaterally once Council collectively has made a decision or agreed a course of action	A Cllrs fiduciary duties and vicarious liability to be written into their guidance pack / information with greater clarity. Then woven into the appropriate SPC policy, then agreed.	Clerk with approval from Council	PARTIALLY COMPLETED The Cllrs understanding of fiduciary duties and vicarious liability has been discussed but is yet to be set out within an SCP policy.
R10	The Council should consider working with Horsham and the West Sussex Association or any other appropriate organisation approved by Horsham to ensure it has comprehensive and up-to-date HR and grievance policies and that these are effectively enforced	There are policies already in place	N/A	COMPLETED The Council has up-to-date HR and grievance policies.
R11	The Clerk should complete CILCA as a matter of priority. A timetable should be agreed between the Chair and the Clerk with dedicated 'professional development' time set aside in the working week to allow this to happen	Clerk Chair & Vice Chair to continue to monitor progress and complete appraisal review before end of 2022	Clerk Chair and Vice Chair	COMPLETED The Clerk has successfully completed the CILCA qualification
R12	The Council should ensure that its email policy is properly enforced, and the Clerk empowered to draw a line under correspondence such that if the policy is breached the Clerk will simply reply to say that the email will not be responded to as it falls outside the policy. There may be exceptions for significant urgent matters, but the Council as a whole shall agree a definition of what those exceptions should be. All emails should go through the Clerk.	Email Policy to be amended Clerk to respond to breaches as per set out in recommendation Cllrs to abide by response	SPC Clerk	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CILR NON-COMPLIANCE The email policy has been amended and agreed by council, but one councillor has opposed the changes and ignores some policy guidance. Not all emails are going through the Clerk
R13	The Council should have an agreed and enforced policy for dealing with persistent or vexatious correspondence to ensure that the business of the Council is not unnecessarily diverted.	A new policy should be put in place which covers vexatious behaviour	Clerk to source policy guidance & present to Working Practices for SPC approval	NO ACTION YET
R14	The Council should agree how governance issues should be raised in meetings to allow reasonable discussion but also to allow other business to be transacted.	This item should be discussed at Working Practices and written into Councillor / Officer protocol then agreed at Full Council	Clerk's office to source policy guidance & present to Working Practices for SPC approval	PARTIALLY COMPLETED There is an understanding of how governance matters should be raised, and a new Officer/ Councillor protocol is now in place, but this might still need to be reinforced - this is yet to be decided
R15	The Council and the Clerk should agree a work schedule to ensure that officers' time is focussed and that there are realistic expectations on their time within agreed working hours.	Produce a working schedule for both Clerk's and Council's agreement	Personnel Committee	PARTIALLY COMPLETED The appraisal process has helped with many time-wasting practices having been dealt with, by council agreement – still some work to do

	Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions				
R16	The Council needs to agree a councillor-officer protocol which would include a shared agreement as to the circumstances when councillors should have access to officer time and how the Clerk should respond to queries from individual councillors.	This item should be discussed at Personnel Committee and written into Councillor / Officer protocol then agreed at Full Council	Personnel Committee	COMPLETED New Councillor / Officer protocol is now agreed and in place
R17	The Council should review its current staffing structure to ensure it is in line with its strategy and able to help the Council deliver it and that the Clerk's key performance objectives and time are geared to deliver that strategy	Review of Staffing Structure K. P. I's are already in place, but need to be reviewed before end of 2022	Clerk, Chair & Vice Chair, then Personnel Com' Clerk/Chair/V. Chair	PARTIALLY COMPLETED Staffing structure is being and has been discussed. New KPI's for the Clerk to be determined in line with new Councils goals after the election
R18	The Council should ensure that the Clerk and the Council make best use of external support and advice from its memberships of professional bodies	Largely this already happens. To be reviewed by Personnel Committee	Personnel Committee	PARTIALLY COMPLETED There is advice sought when required, but there is room for improvement, and this is yet to be discussed and agreed by the Personnel Committee / Council
R19	The Council needs to review whether it has all appropriate and up-to-date policies in place and ensure that policies are available on the website.	Some policies to be reviewed and appropriate amendments put in place	Working Practices	COMPLETED Up to date policies in place and on Web Site
R20	The Council needs to adopt a clear statement of councillors' right to information and a 'need to know' policy and review its implementation of freedom of information requests in the light of that policy.	A 'Need to Know' policy to be put in place or its points added to an existing policy	Working Practices	COMPLETED A 'Need to know' statement is now included within the amended SPC Email Policy.
R21	The Council should adopt a recording of meetings policy and decide how long it needs to keep recordings once minutes have been agreed	SPC to consider amending either its Communications policy or its Retention and Disposal policy and or its Community Engagement policy There is a policy already in place	Working Practices	NO ACTION YET
R22	The Council needs to adopt a social media Policy which would cover both appropriate use of social media by individuals and the Council's own approach to social media as an organisation	There is a policy already in place	N/A	COMPLETED There is a policy in place
R23	The Council needs to review its approach towards planning delegation if this has not already been done in the last six months.	There is a policy now in place	N/A	COMPLETED There is a policy in place
R24	All councillors need to be familiar with Standing Orders and should have a pack which contains all policies, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders that they bring to each and every meeting to aid understanding and avoid confusion.	There is a pack distributed to Cllrs when they take up the position after election	N/A	COMPLETED All Councillors receive an induction pack which includes F. Regs , Standing Orders and other most relevant policies and are asked to bring it to all meetings. (New version to be distributed after '23 election)

	Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions				
R25	The '2-minute' rule in Standing Orders should be enforced and all councillors should support the Chair in ensuring the meeting is run efficiently and without conflict. The rule may be waived in exceptional circumstances where an agenda item is of particular significance, but this must be agreed at the start of the agenda item and a revised time limit (say 5 minutes) agreed	This rule has been more robustly enforced recently by all SPC Chairman to ensure meetings are run more efficiently and with less disruption or unnecessary diversion Chairs to continue use this Standing order, but have in mind when it should be waived	Chairman	ONGOING Despite initial reluctance from some Cllrs, and sometimes annoyance from same when Chairman attempts to use this rule in a strict manner, nonetheless it is being observed more successfully as time passes and Cllrs get used to the idea.
R26	Minutes should be agreed at the following meeting. Amendments can only be proposed by those who attended the meeting and should be factual only rather than opinion	Councillors to continue to be aware of the comments noted within the recommendation and abide by them Chairman to enforce this	Cllrs Chairman	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE Minutes are now being agreed in a way more conforming to best practice, however some councillors are still determined to discuss matters which are not necessarily concerning their accuracy
R27	Minutes should be done in the recommended style as a record of the decisions made at meetings to help anybody understand the process by which a decision is made. So, they should make clear the decision taken with some brief summary of matters considered for and against The requirement that voting is recorded should be reconsidered	None	Clerk	COMPLETED The style and content of minutes is now rarely challenged. There is progressively less of a disruption caused by some Cllrs concerning Draft Minute agreement.
R28		Cllrs should be aware that Standing orders gives them the right to ask for voting to be recorded, however this should be used sparingly and not agreed for the whole or 'rest of the' meeting	Cllrs / Chairman	PARTIALLY COMPLETED There is progress concerning a lesser consideration for voting to be recorded, however there is still room for improvement
R29	The practice of allowing a councillor who cannot attend a meeting to send their views for consideration at that meeting should be stopped	This practice to stop forthwith	Cllrs	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE The issue is less frequent than before, but one councillor remains keen to have his views discussed in his absence
R30	The agendas for meetings should be timetabled to ensure business is effectively transacted. Where there needs to be a variation to the timetable that should be agreed at the start of the meeting	Timetabling 'guidance' to start at the 21st of November Full Council Meeting This is still subject to Chairmans discretion	Clerk / Chairman	COMPLETED This guidance tool is now being used to good effect when necessary
R31	Apologies for absence should only be accepted where a valid reason is either given to the meeting or given to the Clerk in confidence	This was reviewed at the recent meeting with HDC Monitoring Officer, and it was generally agreed that current practice is acceptable – to avoid conflict	All	COMPLETE OTHER THAN CLLR NON-COMPLIANCE Some Councillors are choosing not to give any apologies when absent.

Recommendation	Action to be taken	By Whom	Review of Actions
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Hoey Ainscough Report Draft Review April '23 – Recommendations & Proposed Actions

R32	After the next election the new Council should develop a fully costed and resourced long-term strategic plan for the Town putting personal agendas and differences aside for the greater good of the Steyning community	None	Clerk & SPC	PARTIALLY COMPLETED There is a strategic plan in place, but a new one is to be considered after the election as per recommendation
R33	The Council should review its communication strategy in conjunction with the public to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure that the public understands the work of the Council, is engaged in developing a vision for Steyning and is able to participate more fully in local decision-making.	Low priority to be reviewed by new Council if they feel it necessary	New Council	PARTIALLY COMPLETED There is a policy in place and the council has actively pursued more resident engagement since November, but there is still much work to do
R34	The Council Chair and Clerk should look to learn from and share best practice with outstanding local councils.	Best Practice is already shared and taken up when appropriate. Needs to be discussed more openly when disruption lessens	Chairman & Clerk	NO ACTION YET
R35	Where Steyning Parish Council needs to use external support to comply with these recommendations, they should consult with Horsham District Council and the West Sussex Association before agreeing such support to ensure they have considered all the options and are obtaining expert advice at value for money.	Consultation is already in place. Council to maintain open minded approach to support and expertise	Councillors & Clerk	PARTIALLY COMPLETED The Council has used support and has continued to engage in discussions with HDC, but could do more
R36	Steyning Parish Council should develop an initial implementation plan within six weeks of the report which should be shared with the monitoring officer of Horsham District Council. They should also report on their progress in implementing this action plan to the monitoring officer in 6 months and again in 12 months after the date of this report	Draft Implementation Plan completed and agreed at 21st November Full Council meeting Progress review May 15th SPC Full Council Meeting – Then sent to HDC Final Review at October 23 SPC Full Council Meeting – Then sent to HDC	SPC & Clerk	PARTIALLY COMPLETED Implementation plan completed and agreed Six-month draft review completed

Of the 36 Recommendations: -

11 - Fully Completed,

1 - Ongoing

11 - Partially Completed,

3 - Not been actioned yet

8 - Complete, other than the refusal or reluctance by Cllr or Cllrs to comply

2 - Partly complete mainly through noncollaboration from Cllr or Cllrs

SPC Memorial Tributes Policy Approval

Item 8.3

Briefing Note

In October '22 the Community Committee resolved following recommendation from a working party to update the council's Memorial Seat Policy so that it could also include a resident's application to donate towards memorial tree installations.

The Clerk revamped this policy and presented it to the Community Committee on the 5th September. The new policy incorporates an option for a donation towards a possible memorial tree installation as well as a section on the possibility of repurposing existing seat or new planter installations. This then effectively gives residents an opportunity to make a donation towards anything else which would be owned by SPC and placed on SPC land. These bespoke tribute applications could then be discussed by Community Committee with a default position being that any interested party could still put forward a donation towards a standard tree or seat memorial if their bespoke idea does not pass committee agreement.

Finally, I have included a paragraph allowing residents the option to pursue the Steyning Community Orchard so that they might consider sponsoring an orchard tree instead of an SPC planted memorial – this is because many of these trees are planted, or have been planted, on SPC land anyway.

The Community Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that the policy be approved via the motion below.

*Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Hanson that this committee recommends to full council that it accepts the revised SPC Memorial Tributes Policy as per supporting papers.
Agreed*



STEYNING PARISH COUNCIL

Memorial Tributes Policy & Application Form

Steypning Parish Council operates a Memorial Tributes Scheme, which allows for Steypning residents or relatives of Steypning residents to pay tribute to a loved one by applying to SPC for an agreement to provide a memorial installation on land owned by Steypning Parish Council. If you wish to make a donation towards a memorial seat, tree or other, and which by agreement with SPC can be sited within the parish of Steypning, then please provide your full details below. The SPC Community Committee is charged with making this decision unless stated otherwise.

Contact Details
Name
Address
Post Code
Telephone number
Email Address
In memory of

By signing this form, I agree to the terms and conditions of the Council's Memorial Tribute Policy and agree to the Council processing my personal information and request and agree to correspondence with me in accordance with the Council's Privacy Notice.

Signed

Date

Steypning Parish Council
The Steypning Centre, Fletcher's Croft,
Steypning, West Sussex, BN44 3XZ
For Sat. Nav. Use BN44 3YL

Contact the Clerk on 01903 812042 or
clerk@steypningpc.gov.uk

Steyning Parish Council

Memorial Tributes Policy

Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Memorial Seats (and Benches)

- 1.1** Memorial Seats are donated for a term of up to 20 years.
- 1.2** The Council will place the donated seat at a location agreed with the donor prior to the donation being accepted; all locations are approximate however, and the Council while endeavouring to place and maintain the seat in the agreed position reserves the right to re-position it in the light of any unforeseen or changed circumstances.
- 1.3** Once donated, the seat becomes the property of the Council which at its absolute discretion will carry out repairs due to wear and tear or vandalism to the seat or will permanently remove the seat if it decides that repair or maintenance is no longer appropriate.
- 1.4** At the end of the donation period or when the seat is permanently removed if sooner, the Council will remove the plaque and will re-assign the site to another donor unless, in its absolute discretion, it decides that the original seat is still serving a useful purpose in that position. The plaque will be offered to the donor using the last known contact details, to allow that donor the choice of extending the period of memorial remembrance.
- 1.5** The Council reserves the right to refuse to accept a donation request or to refuse any request that is deemed inappropriate.
- 1.6** Seats are allocated on a first come first served basis with only one donation/family per seat.
- 1.7** The Council will not be held accountable for any further works, changes of land use or planning changes to the site or their surrounding area which might cause a seat to be removed. The Council will always endeavour to contact the donor beforehand at their last known address.
- 1.8** It is the responsibility of the donor to contact the Council with any change of contact details otherwise, the last known details will be used, the Council is not under any duty to make any further or alternative attempts to contact the donor.
- 1.9** The type of seat used at any site is determined by the Council at its absolute discretion. Variation in the type of seat can be requested by the donor, but variations must first be discussed with the Clerk as they are less likely to be permitted and agreed by Committee if they do not conform to, are in keeping with, or add an aesthetic value to the proposed site.
- 1.10** Seats may be either fixed to the ground, installed into concrete, or paving slabs, or placed on site according to the location. At the discretion of the Council, a seat may be placed on a concrete plinth or paving to prevent soil/grass erosion. The cost of this type of installation and in any case the cost of any installation is additional to the cost of the seat and it is this cost which is requested that the donor pays.
- 1.11** If a donor chooses to extend the period of that seat donation beyond the original 20 years agreement then a much-reduced fee will be discussed and agreed with the clerk to cover that period of extension, in keeping with the term of that extension, the likely remaining 'life' of that installation, and any associated additional maintenance requirements. These requests are an administrative function of the clerk's office and will not necessarily require Council approval.

- 1.12** It is sometimes possible for an existing seat to be re-purposed or renewed as and when that seat is no longer within the initial donorship period and the original requester has not asked for an extension to their commemorative period. In this instance a fee will be determined based upon the likely remaining 'life' of that installation, and any associated additional maintenance or ground works requirements, which will be at the discretion of the Council. These requests are likely to be less costly than a new installation but more costly than an extension period arrangement and in any case will need Council approval based upon the details of the re-purposing/renewal.

2. Memorial Trees

- 2.1** Memorial Trees are donated for the natural life of that tree.
- 2.2** The Council will place the donated tree at a location agreed with the donor prior to the donation being accepted; all locations are approximate however, and the Council while endeavouring to place and look after the tree in the agreed position reserves the right to remove it should a need require it to do so and in the light of any unforeseen or changed circumstances. If this should happen within 10 years of the original donation then SPC will endeavour to plant a replacement in a location at the discretion of SPC.
- 2.3** Once donated, the tree becomes the property of the Council which at its absolute discretion will carry out tree surgery and other maintenance due to wear and tear or vandalism or disease or will permanently remove the tree if it decides that maintenance is no longer appropriate.
- 2.4** The Council reserves the right to refuse to accept a donation request or to refuse any request that is deemed inappropriate.
- 2.5** Trees are allocated and planted on a first come first served basis with only one donation/family per tree or other tribute.
- 2.6** The Council will not be held accountable for any further works, changes of land use or planning changes to the site or their surrounding area which might cause a tree to be removed. The Council will always endeavour to contact the donor beforehand at their last known address.
- 2.7** It is the responsibility of the donor to contact the Council with any change of contact details otherwise, the last known details will be used, the Council is not under any duty to make any further or alternative attempts to contact the donor.
- 2.8** The type of tree planted at any site is determined by the Council at its absolute discretion, and in keeping with the agreed planting plans for the associated area of land in which it is to be planted. Variation in the type of tree can be requested by the donor, but variations must first be discussed with the Clerk as they are less likely to be permitted and agreed by Committee if they do not conform to, are in keeping with, or add an aesthetic value to the proposed site.
- 2.9** Trees will likely be staked into position and could be tree-guarded if requested and paid for by the donor and agreed by the Council
- 2.10** If a tree memorial request cannot be processed by the Council due to lack of appropriate positions then with the agreement of the donor, the clerk will pass on the details of the request to the Steyning Community Orchard Group {SCO Group} to see if that group might be able to find a location within the Steyning Parish. In the event that this group can process the application then the SCO group policy and terms of conditions for that planting will apply, even if the location for the tree installation happens to be taking place on land owned by SPC – As SCO will have already obtained permission for any planting through the SPC Community Committee, and in doing so, the SCO will undertake any appropriate maintenance at their discretion and in accordance with their own terms and conditions.
- 2.11** The SPC will undertake to replace the tree in the first 3 years after planting, should it fail to survive for whatever reason – the type and variety of the replacement might need to be different than the original type to ensure better survival and this choice will be at the absolute discretion of the Council.

3. Other Memorial Tributes

- 3.1** SPC will consider any other memorial tribute request. In the first instance the Clerk will determine if such a request is in keeping with the nature of the Council's policies and mission statement, and if appropriate will then bring the request to the Community Committee for approval and broadly in keeping with the terms and conditions set out above (covering seat and tree installations) the Community Committee will agree upon the details and cost of the installation, as and where appropriate.

4. Plaques

- 4.1** We ask that the donor provides their own plaque and that the wording is sent to the Clerk for approval - The Clerk will ensure the plaque is fixed onto the bench or into the ground adjacent tree or other installation has been completed and will then inform the donor's family. Any plaque whose wording has not been approved will not be affixed and any such plaque affixed by any other person will be liable to removal
- 4.2** The size of the plaque should not exceed 120mm by 60 mm
- 4.3** For tree planting, the plaque should show the variety/tree type, planting date and donor details

5. Payments/Charges

- 5.1** The cost of the installation will include the supply, delivery, ground works and a one off maintenance fee plus VAT at the standard rate, as per agreed by SPC and with the donor. SPC will affix the plaque to the seat, or appropriate other location. The type of seat, tree or other tribute will be dependent on its location, and this will determine the cost of the installation. Payment will be via BACS or cheque and made payable to Steyning Parish Council.
- 5.2** The fees and charges for donated seats/ trees will be revised from time to time and will be provided on request to the Council. All prices quoted will include VAT at the rate in force at the time of enquiry.
- 5.3** We ask that donors pay 50% of the full amount in advance of tribute installation. And 50% subsequent to completed installation.

6. Delivery and Installation

- 6.1** The normal period for a tribute to be supplied and installed is 3 months from the payment of the deposit, but this might depend upon the type of request and therefore the Council's ability to make a swift or in some cases a more considered and lengthy period of agreement. For tree planting, the time will likely be late autumn or early spring which is the usual planting period which affords the best chance of survival and prosperous future growth. In exceptional circumstances beyond the Council's control (notably weather and ground conditions), the Council may not be able to meet its target. The Council will not be held responsible should this situation arise.

Please see the SPC website for our Data Protection Policies

Signing off the 21/22 External Audit Report

Item 8.4

Briefing Notes

Update from the Clerk - Every year for the past 5 years an individual persists in communicating directly with our external auditor and objecting to the Council's agreed governance and accountability end of year submission {The AGAR}. Since September 22 we have been attempting to resolve the latest objections .

After the external auditor admitted to forgetting to ask us for information in order to resolve it – for several months - we have been since more actively producing documents and explanations in order to help them resolve the many pages of objections received via this individual.

Notably in mid-June in one week the Clerk's office spent 27 hours compiling information and completing responses to specific questions.

Since July we have been regularly asking for an update on the resolution of objections and at long last therefore hoping for the completion of the external auditor's report for the year 2021/22.

On the 13th September the Clerks office received the following email from our external auditors.

Abject apologies John

Despite best efforts to move the objection forward I have been unable to progress it due to other contract pressures – all SAAA related and my end.

I cannot progress the 21-22 AGAR until the 21-22 objection is resolved as the objection must be signed off before the EA certificate can be finalised.

In reality, I am not going to be able to move this on now until after we pass the 30 September deadline.

You asked for an estimate on costs

The additional costs to date caused by the objection are currently around £3,250.

Further briefing note for your information -

Last year the resolution of this individuals' objections to the 20/21 AGAR cost the Council £1,000, and the Clerk about a weeks' worth of normal council work time lost. The was the final passage from last year's resolution letter from the External Auditor :-

My conclusion is that there is no requirement to qualify the Report of the External Auditor for 2020 or 2021 in relation to this matter. Neither do I consider from the information provided, that there is any requirement for me to report further in relation to this matter.

I have provided a similar letter to [REDACTED]. This does not preclude [REDACTED] or any other relevant person, from raising concerns in the future. As with all issues/objections raised we would look for the complainant to engage with the council first, but we cannot ignore any apparently legitimate concerns raised by a relevant person.



Our Ref: MARK/

Mr J Fullbrook
Steyning Parish Council
The Steyning Centre
Fletchers Croft
Steyning
West Sussex
BN44 3XZ

31 August 2023

Dear Mr Fullbrook,

Engagement Letter – Local Authority

We are pleased to accept the instruction to act as internal auditors for the Council and are writing to confirm the terms of our appointment outlined below. The purpose of this engagement letter is to set out the basis on which we are engaged to act as internal auditors and our respective areas of responsibility, it should be read in conjunction with our standard terms and conditions.

We are bound by the ethical requirements of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, and accept instructions to act for you on the basis that we will act in accordance with those ethical requirements. A copy of these requirements can be viewed at our offices on request or can be seen at www.accaglobal.com.

1. Period of engagement

- a. This letter is effective for accounting periods ending on or after 31st March 2024. (The 2023/24 Council year)
- b. It replaces all previous engagement letters. The previously agreed commencement date for this engagement still applies.
- c. We will deal with matters arising in respect of periods prior to the above period as appropriate.

2. Responsibilities of the Council and Internal auditors

- a. The council is responsible for ensuring that the council maintains adequate accounting records and for preparing financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with current practices and guidelines.
- b. You are also responsible for making available to us, as and when required, all the council's accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings. We are entitled to require from the council's officers and employees such other information and explanations as we think necessary for the performance of our duties as internal auditors.
- c. We have a statutory responsibility to report to the external auditors whether in our opinion the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with current practices and guidelines as outlined in JPAG Practitioners guide. In forming this opinion, we shall:
 - i. Review the accounting records and all other relevant records and related information, including minutes of all meetings.
 - ii. If deemed necessary, conduct two or more reviews per annum to verify both the procedural and financial aspects of the council.

- iii. Report to you in writing any such adjustments that we may consider necessary, or those areas where we think your systems may require improvement.
 - iv. Sign off the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) as internal auditors.
- d. We have a professional responsibility to report if the financial statements do not comply with applicable proper practices, unless in our opinion the non-compliance is justified in the circumstances. In determining whether or not the departure is justified we consider:
- i. whether the departure is required in order for the financial statements to give a true and fair view; and
 - ii. whether adequate disclosure has been made concerning the departure
- e. As with other professional services firms, we are required to identify our clients for the purposes of the UK anti-money laundering legislation. We are likely to request from you, and retain, some information and documentation for these purposes and/or to make searches of appropriate databases. If we are not able to obtain satisfactory evidence of your identity within a reasonable time, there may be circumstances in which we are not able to proceed with the audit appointment.
- f. The provision of audit services is a business in the regulated sector under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and, as such, partners and staff in audit firms have to comply with this legislation which includes provisions that may require us to make a money laundering disclosure in relation to information we obtain as part of our normal audit work. It is not our practice to inform you when such a disclosure is made or the reasons for it because of the restrictions imposed by the 'tipping off' provisions of the legislation.

3. Scope of Audit

- a. Our audit will be conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines, and will include such tests of transactions and of the existence, ownership and valuation of assets and liabilities as we consider necessary.
- b. We shall obtain an understanding of the accounting and internal control systems in order to assess their adequacy as a basis for the preparation of the financial statements and to establish whether proper accounting records have been maintained by the council. We shall expect to obtain such appropriate evidence as we consider sufficient to enable us to draw reasonable conclusions there from.
- c. The nature and extent of our procedures will vary according to our assessment of the council's accounting system and, where we wish to place reliance on it, the internal control system, and may cover any aspect of the business's operations that we consider appropriate. Our audit is not designed to identify all significant weaknesses in the council's systems but, if such weaknesses come to our notice during the course of our audit which we think should be brought to your attention, we shall report them to you. We accept no duty or responsibility to any other third party as concerns our reports.
- d. As part of our normal audit procedures, we may request you to provide written confirmation of certain oral representations which we have received from you during the course of the audit on matters having a material effect on the financial statements. In particular, where we bring misstatements in the accounts to your attention that are not adjusted, we shall require written representation of your reasons.
- e. In order to assist us with the examination of your financial statements, we shall request sight of all documents or statements, including minutes and reports, which are due to be issued with the financial statements. We are also entitled to attend all general meetings of the council and to receive notice of all such meetings.
- f. The responsibility of safeguarding the assets of the council and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with the council. However, we shall endeavour to plan our audit so that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements in the financial statements or accounting records (including those resulting from fraud, error or non-compliance with law or regulations), but our examination should not be relied upon to disclose all such material misstatements or frauds, errors or instances of non-compliance as may exist.

- g. Once we have issued/uploaded our report we have no further direct responsibility in relation to the financial statements for that financial year. However, we expect that you will inform us of any changes occurring between the date of our report and submission to the external auditor.
- h. We appreciate that the present size of your council may render it uneconomic to create a system of internal control based on the segregation of duties for different functions within each area of the council. In planning and performing our audit work we shall take account of this.

4. Electronic Publication

- a. Where audited financial information is published on a website or by other electronic means, it is your responsibility to ensure that any such publication properly presents the financial information and auditor's report. We reserve the right to withhold consent to the electronic publication of our report or the financial statements if they are to be published in an inappropriate manner.
- b. It is your responsibility to ensure there are controls in place to prevent or detect quickly any changes to electronically published information. We are not required to carry out ongoing review of the information after it is first published. The maintenance and integrity of electronically published information is your responsibility and we accept no responsibility for changes made to audited information after it is first posted.

5. Communication

- a. In order to ensure that there is effective two-way communication between us we set out below the expected form and timing of such communications
 - i. We may arrange a meeting to discuss the forthcoming audit prior to the expected start date.
 - ii. We may arrange a meeting to discuss any matters arising from completing the on-site work.
 - iii. We shall of course contact you on a regular basis regarding both audit and other matters.
 - iv. Our report will be issued in .Pdf format via a secure server, which is password protected.

6. Other services

- a. You may request that we provide other services from time to time. We will issue a separate letter of engagement and scope of work to be performed accordingly. Because rules and regulations frequently change you must ask us to confirm any advice already given if a transaction is delayed or a similar transaction is to be undertaken.

7. Limitation of liability

- a. We specifically draw your attention to our standard terms and conditions which set out the basis on which we limit our liability to you and to others.
- b. There are no third Parties that we have agreed should be entitled to rely on the work done pursuant to this engagement letter other than the external auditors.

8. Fees

- a. Our fees are calculated using a stand rate per hour, plus disbursements and VAT at the standard applicable rate.
- b. Our fees for the 2023/24 council year are £65 per hour + VAT
- c. Where applicable we charge £0.45p per mile for travel from the auditors home address.
- d. Our fees are payable on presentation of invoice.

9. Cancellation of Services

- a. Services can be cancelled at any time in writing
- b. Cancellation will be effective from the end of the period to which this letter of engagement applies. (para 1a.)
- c. All outstanding fees become payable

10. Agreement of terms

- a. This letter supersedes any previous engagement letter. Once it has been agreed, this letter will remain effective until it is replaced.
- b. If this letter is not in accordance with your understanding of the scope of our engagement or your circumstances have changed, please let us know
- c. This letter should be read in conjunction with the firm's standard terms and conditions.

Yours faithfully,

Mulberry & Co

We confirm that by electronically approving this document we are agreeing that we have read and understood the contents of this letter and related terms and conditions and further agree that it accurately reflects our fair understanding of the services that we require you to undertake.

Item 8.6 Revised Caretakers Contracts

Briefing Note

As part of our need to continually update and amend SPC administrative practices, and to ensure we comply with new legislative requirements, the Clerk's office has endeavored to compile revised staff contract documents which will cover the Caretaker, Maintenance and Cleaning combined roles.

The draft document which follows this briefing note has been derived and adapted from the NALC model 'Contract of Employment' paper. It has been checked against the Society of Local Councils Clerks {SLCC} guidance and has been further compared and contrasted with other progressive Parish Council staff contracts which broadly cover the same type of role.

It was then discussed and reviewed by the Personnel Committee on the 22nd of August where it was agreed to recommend to Full Council that this document becomes the new format and script for our Caretakers contracts. If SPC Full Council approves, then we will start to have one-to-one meetings with our four Steyning Centre Caretakers, so that we can complete the process of adoption for as soon as possible, and having obtained their signed agreement or otherwise the Clerk's office will inform SPC in due course. It should be noted that all four employees involved are aware of this process and none are currently giving any indication of non-compliance. It should also be noted that none of these revised contracts of employment will be in any way disadvantageous to the employees involved.

The Personnel Committee motion from that meeting is as follows:

Cllr Young proposed, seconded by Cllr Norcross to recommend to full council that the contract document becomes the new format and script for the Caretakers Contracts. Agreed.

Following this meeting the Clerk received some final notes for consideration from *HR Services*, who have been involved and advised throughout the process. The document that follows this briefing note therefore is the version which was agreed for recommendation to Full Council, but also contains some final amendments for your consideration **'in red'**.

Working Practices Group – Terms of Reference update

Briefing Note

On the 7th September @ 11.30 am the Working Practices Group met to deliberate and discuss a number of items, the updating of the terms of the group being one of them.

In attendance were Cllrs Norcross, Hanson, Ballance and S Alexander. Also present were the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Clerk explained the reasons for the updated document, notably that some of the elements involved with what this group had historically been charged with undertaking were now the delegated responsibility of the Personnel Committee and were therefore no longer required.

All SPC Councillors had been sent the new draft document in advance of this meeting and asked to provide comments to assist the Working Practices group in their deliberations. These comments had been taken on board by those present and were part of the discussion that followed.

After consideration the group decided not to make any amendments to the draft provided, and they were then unanimously agreed upon the following decision.

Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross, to recommend to Full Council that the document be agreed on as per the supporting paper sent out to all councillors. **Agreed**



Steypning Parish Council

Working Practices Group Terms of Reference

Main Function:

To ensure there is an undertaking to review and amend where necessary all of SPC's policy, procedure and protocol documents as well as checking that SPC Risk Assessments are reviewed and updated where appropriate.

Members on the SPC Working Practices Group for the municipal year 2023/24 are as follows:

Cllr Norcross, Cllr Hanson, Cllr M Alexander, Cllr Balance & Cllr S Alexander.

Terms of Reference:

To review Council policy documents in accordance with statutory regulation such as the Local Government Act 1972 and other acts, regulations and advice from bodies such as NALC, SLCC and WSALC. Where possible 'model' documentation should be used in the first instance, with then specific SPC arrangements agreed and added as necessary. This covers documents such as:

- Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Dispensation Scheme, Scheme of Members Allowances, Scheme of Delegation, Discipline and Grievance Procedures.

Review of Protocols, that is - Confidential information communication, use of IT and Emails, and other policies to maintain good working relationships with Councillors, Staff and the general public including Dignity at Work, Councillor/Staff Protocol and Code of Practice for Handling Complaints.

To ensure the Council's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed and updated in accordance with latest legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and this should include the annual review of SPC Risk Assessments.

To ensure the Council's Data Protection Policies are in accordance with statutory advice, such as the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that the associated policies are reviewed when further advice becomes available. This covers documents such as: the Freedom of Information Policy, the Data Protection Policy, the Data Breach Notification Policy, the CCTV Policy and Code of Practice, the Subject Access Request Policy and the Document Retention and Disposal Policy.

Agreed by SPC Full Council at their meeting of 18.09.23

Previous Terms of reference -

Steyning Parish Council

Working Practices Committee Terms of Reference

Main Function:

The undertaking of all employment related matters and Council policy and procedure documents.

Terms of Reference:

To make recommendations to the Council on all employment related matters including contracts, salary reviews and superannuation and publication of Staff Handbook.

To review Council policy documents in accordance with statutory advice, ie - Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Dispensation Scheme, Scheme of Members Allowances, Discipline and Grievance Procedure.

Protocols ie, Confidential information, use of IT and e-mails, and other policies to maintain good working relationship with Councillors, staff and the general public including Dignity At Work, Councillor/Staff Protocol and Code of Practice for Handling Complaints.

To ensure the Council's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed and updated in accordance with latest legislation, Risk Assessments, Terms of Reference for Committees etc.

Agreed by F & C at their meeting of 03.03.15

Working Practices Group – SPC Data Retention and Disposal Policy update

Briefing Note

On the 7th September @ 11.30 am the Working Practices Group met to deliberate and discuss a number of items, the review and amendment of the SPC 'Data and Retention Policy' being one of them.

In attendance were Cllrs Norcross, Hanson, Ballance and S Alexander. Also present were the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Clerk explained the reasons for the proposed amendments.

In terms of the main text there were a number of references made to the 'Senior Assistant' and 'Direct Manager', where for SPC it was more accurate to amend these references to the 'Deputy Clerk'.

In terms of the 'Appendix A, Document Retention Period' details, each amendment or addition (in red) was discussed and agreed in turn. The amended draft 'SPC Data Retention and Disposal Policy' follows this Briefing note, with the amendments still noted in red for reference.

All SPC Councillors had been sent the new draft document in advance of this meeting and asked to provide comments to assist the Working Practices group in their deliberations. These comments had been taken on board by those present and were part of the discussion that followed.

After consideration the group decided not to make any amendments to the draft provided, and they were then unanimously agreed upon the following decision.

Cllr Norcross proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance, to recommend to Full Council that the 'Data Retention and Disposal Policy' amendments are accepted as per the supporting paper sent out to all councillors. Agreed



Data Retention and Disposal Policy

Adopted Date: ~~16th May 2022~~
Review Date: ~~March 2023~~

1 Introduction

1.1 The guidelines set out in this document supports the Council's Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation & The Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation.

1.2 It is important that the Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

1.3 The Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that it provides to its residents. This document will help us to:-

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3 Scope

3.1 For the purpose of this Strategy, 'documents' includes electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

3.2 Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

4 Standards

4.1 The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. This document provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
- Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Clerk's Office and/or the Senior Assistant's office, access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Clerk's Office.
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes e.g. Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within the Clerk's Office ~~or the Senior Assistant's Office~~.

5 Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1 Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.

6.2 The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

6.2 Other delegated staff are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy.

6.3 The Clerk responsible for ensuring that the guidelines set out in this policy are adhered to and to ensure that any documents disposed of are done so in accordance with their 'sensitivity' (i.e. whether they are normal waste or 'Confidential Waste')

7 Confidential Waste

7.1 Fundamentally any information that is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, is available on the website or is open to public inspection should NOT be treated as confidential waste.

7.2 However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Councils Constitution should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

7.3 Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:

- Exempt information contained within committee reports.
- Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances. For example completed application forms and letters.
- Materials given to us on a 'confidential' or on a limited use basis e.g. material provided by contractors or the police.

7.4 Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:

- Documents that are available to the public via our web site or by submitting an appropriate search request to ourselves for general information.
- All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt

8 Disposal of Documentation

8.1 Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in 7.3 will be shredded within the council buildings.

9 Retention

9.1 Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD) guidelines.

9.2 Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

9.3 Disclosure information appertaining to Disclosure and Barring Checks must be kept securely in a locked cabinet. Only those entitled to see it in the course of their duties should have access. The security and confidentiality of all Disclosure information is closely registered under the Police Act 1997.

9.4 Disclosure information must not be retained for a period of more than six months and must be destroyed in a secure manner using the shredder in the Reception office.

9.5 Any unauthorised employee accessing or attempting to access Disclosures or Disclosure information or personnel records will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

9.6 The attached 'Appendix' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by those officers responsible for the management of these particular documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the attached 'Appendix'

10 Storage and Access

10.1 Disclosure information is kept separately from personnel files and in securely lockable, non-portable cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to the Clerk, and/or ~~the Senior Assistant.~~ Deputy Clerk.

11 Handling

11.1 The Council complies with s124 of the Police Act 1997, so that Disclosure Information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The Council maintains a record of all those to who Disclosures or Disclosure Information has been revealed and recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

11.2 Personal information will only be available to those who are authorised officers.

11.3 Customers details and information will be kept up to date and reviewed annually by an authorised officer.

12 Usage

12.1 Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's/employee's consent has been given. Disclosure Information will be shared between different areas of the Council, if necessary.

12.2 Where Disclosure information is shared with anyone other than the Clerk, ~~and the Deputy Clerk Senior Assistant and the direct Manager~~ the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

APPENDIX A

Recommended Document Retention Timescales

The retention period should be the number of years specified plus the current financial period (i.e. three years plus the current period, therefore at least three years documentation will always be retained at any given point in time).

This list is not exhaustive; if you are unsure about any document, contact the Parish Clerk or **Deputy Clerk** ~~Senior Assistant~~ for clarification.

Document Retention Period

Finance

Document	Retention Period
Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Signed Audited Accounts	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	5 years
Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System	At least 5 years
Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	6 years
Purchase Orders	6 years
Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)	6 years
Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)	6 years
BACS listings	6 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	3 years
Copy receipts	6 years
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	6 years
Debtors and rechargeable works records	6 years
Expenses and travel allowance claims	6 years
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	10 years
Journal Sheets	5 years
Ledger / Trial Balance	10 years
Year-end ledger tabulations – ledger details and cost updates	5 years
Published Budget Books	Indefinitely Medium-Term
Financial Plan	Indefinitely
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	3 years
Bank Statement (Disk Space) and Instructions to banks	6 years
Bank Statements (Hardcopy)	6 years
Banking Records including Giro cheques, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments	6 years
Prime evidence that money has been banked	6 years
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	2 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	2 years

Bank Reconciliation	3 years 6 Years
Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years
Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems	3 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	5 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/ Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	5 years
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years
Payroll and tax information relating to employees	6 years
Payroll costing analysis	2 years
Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)	6 years
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions Section	Indefinitely
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts and loan tabulations	6 years (after redemption of loan)
VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records	6 years
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies indefinitely Insurance records and claims	6 years
Capital and contracts register	Indefinitely
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand	6 years from completion of contract
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal	12 years from completion of contract
All Other reconciliations	3 years

Personnel

Unsuccessful application forms	6 months
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year
Successful applications forms and CVs	For duration of employment + 5 years
References received	For duration of employment + 5 years
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 5 years
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 5 years
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 5 years
Annual appraisal/assessment records	Current year & previous 2 years 3 Years
Time Control Records	2 years
Criminal Records Bureau Checks	6 months
Personnel files and training records	5 years after employment ceases
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved - Verbal - Written - Final warning - Anything involving children	6 months 1 year 18 months permanently
Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses	6 years
Councillor Code of Conduct - Decision Notices	2 years published on SPC Web Site 6 years in SPC Archive

Corporate

Minutes and reports of Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports for Special Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports of sub-committees	Indefinitely
Notes and reports of working groups	Indefinitely
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset Management records	Indefinitely
Asset management reports	Indefinitely
Internal audit records	3 years
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk management reports	Indefinitely
Performance reports	Indefinitely
Equalities data	Indefinitely
Questionnaire data	Indefinitely
Details regarding burials	Indefinitely
Drivers logbooks and mileage	6 years
Vehicle maintenance and registration records (all necessary certificates, MOT certificates, test records and vehicle registration documents etc)	2 years after vehicle disposed of
Fuel usage records	3 years
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Show health & safety statements	2 Years
Show application including caterers, displays, competition entrants	1 year
Services and equipment quotations – show	1 year
Contacts for show	1 year
Show stalls database inc. handcraft and horticulture entrants' details	1 year
trips tenders for coach hire	1 year
Trip database of applicants Coach Tours	1 year
Paper application	1 year
Pre-tender qualification document Summary list of expression of interest received Company contacts A summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied with the expressions of interest Initial application	1 year
Successful tender documentation Life of contract	6 years
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until final payment is made
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years
Booking diaries	3 years

Electronic booking information is held in the system indefinitely due to the need to gather statistical information	Indefinitely
Premises License applications	Indefinitely

Health & Safety

Health and Safety Accident books	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within)
Medical records containing details of employee exposed to asbestos or as specified by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999	40 years from the date of the last entry
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue
Records relating to accidents person over 18 years	3 years from date of accident
Records relating to accidents person under 18 years	Until 21st birthday
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years
All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc)	2 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years
Warranties	10 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years
Plant and equipment testing	2 years
Risk Assessment Forms	2 years
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years
Staff Handbook safety checks employees signage	For duration of employment + 2 years

Additional Items	
Approved Minutes	Indefinite
Draft/Rough notes taken at meeting	Until minutes are approved
CCTV footage	14 days
Council Meeting Video or Audio recordings	Archived from Web Site after 2 years Disposed with, unless containing relevant historical significance, after 6 years

Working Practices Group – SPC Publication Scheme

Briefing Note

On the 7th September @ 11.30 am the Working Practices Group met to deliberate and discuss a number of items, the updating of the SPC Publication Scheme being one of them.

In attendance were Cllrs Norcross, Hanson, Ballance and S Alexander. Also present were the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Clerk explained the reasons for the updated document. It was noted that the previous publication scheme was clearly needing to be brought up to date in relation to content covered, contact details, fees, Web Site availability and also in terms of ease of community engagement.

The format change and content details were in the first instance a product of the clerks completion of a module within the recent Cilca training programme, and the members were reassured that the new format had been passed by the course modulator as part of that training programme.

Additional elements / documents proposed for inclusion and to be published by SPC in this revised version are still noted in red for Full Council. And the revised draft 'SPC Publication Scheme' follows this Briefing note.

All SPC Councillors had been sent the new draft document in advance of this meeting and asked to provide comments to assist the Working Practices group in their deliberations. These comments had been taken on board by those present and were part of the discussion that followed.

After consideration the group decided to make one amendment to the draft provided, and they were then unanimously agreed upon the following decision.

Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Norcross, to recommend to Full Council that the additions to the Publication Scheme be accepted as per supporting paper subject to an amendment that the grit bin locations also be placed on the SPC Website. Agreed

PUBLICATION SCHEME

Introduction

It is the duty of every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme.

This publication scheme provides a list of all the information Steyning Parish Council will routinely make available and explains how it can be accessed (either by the Parish Council website or hard copy).

Charges

Information is available **free of charge** from the website www.steyning.gov.uk

Should hard copies be required Steyning Parish Council may charge costs to recover disbursements for example photocopying and postage and these charges are detailed below. Anyone requesting hard copies of documents will be notified of any charge and be asked to pay before any information is supplied.

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement Cost	Photocopying @ 10p per A4 sheet (black and white)	Actual cost to the Parish Council
Disbursement Cost	Postage	Actual cost of standard 2 nd class post via Royal Mail

Classes of Information

The information held by Steyning Parish Council is recorded under the following classes of information:

- Class 1** **Who we are and what we do**
- Class 2** **What we spend and how we spend it**
- Class 3** **What our priorities are and how we are doing**
- Class 4** **How we make decisions**
- Class 5** **Our Policies and Procedures**
- Class 6** **Lists and Registers**
- Class 7** **The Services we offer**

Contact Information

Contact details: John Fullbrook (Clerk) Steyning Parish Council, The Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft,
Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3XL

Telephone: 01903 812042

Email: clerk@steyningpc.gov.uk

Website: www.steyningpc.gov.uk

Information to be published

Class 1 – Who we are and what we do

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Who's who on the council and it's committees	✓	✓
Contact details for the Parish Clerk and Council Members	✓	✓
Location of main council office and accessibility details	✓	✓
Staffing Structure	✓	✓
Pay Multiple details	✓	✓

Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Annual Return and Report from External Auditor	✓	✓
Finalised SPC budget	✓	✓
Precept	✓	✓
Financial Regulations	✓	✓
Standing Orders	✓	✓
Grants given and received	✓	✓
Monthly Payment Lists	✓	✓
Monthly Expenditure Exceeding £500 Lists	✓	✓
List of contracts awarded and value of contract	✓	✓
Invitation to Contract Tender documents	✓	✓
Waste Contracts information	✓	✓
Members allowances and expenses	✓	

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Steyping Neighbourhood Plan	✓	✓
Annual Report to Parish	✓	✓
SPC Strategic Plan {inc. Mission Statement}	✓	✓
SPC Business and Financial Plan	✓	✓
SPC Action Plan	✓	✓
Most Recent Internal Audit Report	✓	✓
SPC Youth Service Provider Termly Reports	✓	✓
SPC Wardens Reports - monthly	✓	✓

Class 4 – How we make decisions

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Timetable of SPC Meetings	✓	✓
Agendas of SPC meetings	✓	✓
Minutes of SPC meetings (unless properly regarded as confidential)	✓	✓
SPC Working Party Notes	✓	✓
Reports presented to council meetings	✓	✓
Responses to consultation papers	✓	
Responses to SPC planning applications	✓	✓

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Procedural SPC standing orders	✓	✓
Steining PC Scheme of Delegation {Terms of Reference for Committees}	✓	✓
Delegated authority in respect of officers	✓	✓
SPC Code of Conduct	✓	✓
SPC Equality and Diversity Policy	✓	✓
SPC Health and Safety Policy	✓	✓
SPC Recruitment Policy	✓	✓
SPC Policies and Procedures for handling requests for information	✓	✓
SPC Complaints Procedure	✓	✓
SPC Dispensation Scheme	✓	✓
Data Breach Notification policy (GDPR)	✓	✓
SPC Data Protection Policy (GDPR)	✓	✓
Schedule of charges for the publication of information	✓	✓
SPC Document retention and Disposal Policy	✓	✓
SPC Privacy Notice GDPR	✓	✓
SPC Subject Access Request Policy	✓	✓
SPC CCTV Policy and Code of Practice	✓	✓
SPC FOI Policy and Code of Practice	✓	✓
SPC Dignity at Work Policy	✓	✓
SPC Email Policy	✓	✓
SPC Unacceptable behaviour Policy	✓	✓
Overarching Protocol for Councillors conduct	✓	✓
SPC Communications Protocol	✓	✓
SPC Social Media Policy	✓	✓
SPC Community Engagement Policy	✓	✓
SPC Grant Awarding Policy	✓	✓
SPC Training Statement of intent	✓	✓
SPC Memorial Seat Policy	✓	✓
SPC Hiring Agreement	✓	✓
SPC Staff Grievance Policy	✓	✓
SPC Staff Discipline Policy	✓	✓
SPC Risk Assessment {Covering all functions}	✓	✓

Class 6 – Lists and Registers

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Asset Register	✓	✓
Land Register	✓	✓
Register of Members Interests	✓	✓
Register of Gifts and Hospitality	✓	✓
Conservation Area Character Assessment List	✓	✓

Class 7 – Services we offer

Information	Hard Copy	Website
Play areas and recreational facilities	✓	✓
Open Air Gym	✓	✓
Seating and Litter Bins	✓	✓
Sports pitches and Changing rooms	✓	✓
Bus Shelter and Public Convenience locations and opening times	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	✓
Street Cleaning – Areas Covered	✓	
Grit Bin Locations {Steyning Winter Maintenance Plan}	✓	✓
Tree Survey Report	✓	

Working Practices Group – SPC Grant Awarding Policy update

Briefing Note

On the 7th September @ 11.30 am the Working Practices Group met to deliberate and discuss a number of items, the review and amendment of the SPC 'Grant Awarding Policy' being one of them.

In attendance were Cllrs Norcross, Hanson, Ballance and S Alexander. Also present were the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Clerk explained the reasons for the proposed amendments.

There were a number of changes to the text, some involving better language or grammar with mainly the idea being that the terms and conditions of the Award Scheme should be clearer and more user-friendly. The Clerk had also compiled a simple and again user friendly one page application form, whereas previously members had been reliant on an applicant sending in a letter or email with little in the way of pointers in terms of what members needed to be made aware of in order to make a reasoned decision in favour or against such an award.

All SPC Councillors had been sent the new draft document in advance of this meeting and asked to provide comments to assist the Working Practices group in their deliberations. These comments had been taken on board by those present and were part of the discussion that followed.

After consideration the group decided not to make any amendments to the draft provided, and they were then unanimously agreed upon the following decision.

Cllr Ballance proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander, to recommend to Full Council that the {SPC Grant Awarding} Policy be accepted as per the supporting paper sent out to all councillors. Agreed



GRANT AWARDING POLICY

Introduction

A Parish Council is empowered to incur expenditure in the execution of any works in order to exercise its statutory powers. There is also a power to incur expenditure for the benefit of the area, for some or all of its residents (Local Government Act 1972, section 137). Under these powers Steypning Parish Council makes annual provision for grant aid for its residents.

As part of this commitment, the Council has for example, designated funds for two local organisations in order to support their work in the past. The first of these groups is *Steypning in Bloom*, which does so much to brighten up the look of our local community, and especially the High Street. Secondly, the *Vintage Years Group* which is a very significant partner in the Council's work to help combat 'Isolation and loneliness' in the Steypning Parish Community.

The remaining monies will be distributed to deserving volunteer groups and local charities to assist in their work within the parish of Steypning. The distribution of these general grant funds will be based upon their requirements and the compelling nature of their applications.

To qualify, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that funding will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish. Grants will normally be considered quarterly by Finance & General Purposes Committee (March, June, September, December), unless there are special circumstances which require more immediate consideration. In determining the validity of an application, the Council will refer to the following guidelines:

Examples of applications which will be considered include:

1. The purchasing of equipment either in part or in full.
2. The funding of transport (especially sustainable transport) to enable members to partake in a group trip or outing.
3. For training activities.
4. For activities that raise the profile of the area.
5. For temporary running costs of a viable group, that is experiencing a period of hardship.
6. For hosting special events or celebrations.
7. For the provision of recreational facilities.

NB As the Parish Council has declared a climate emergency, it will look favourably upon schemes, projects, equipment, or provision that help create biodiversity or climate resilience, or which would help reduce energy or waste or water consumption.

Conditions:

1. Grants will not be awarded to individuals.
2. Additional applications within a 12-month period will not normally be considered
3. The award must be used for the purpose for which the application was made.
4. If the group is unable to use the award before the proposed end date, then an explanation should be provided to the Parish Council.
5. Awards must be accounted for, and evidence of expenditure should be supplied as requested. If the council is not satisfied that the grant has been spent as defined; they reserve the right to require a refund.
6. Any grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded unless the written approval of the Parish Council has been obtained for a change in use of the grant monies.
7. Any unspent portion of the grant must be returned to the Parish Council within 6 months after the proposed end date of the project.
8. Successful applicants that receive a grant are asked to submit a report within one year of the award date detailing how the grant has been used and the respective project costs. The report may include photos (if relevant to the project and use).
9. This policy may be amended at any time by the Council following a motion having been published on the agenda.

Eligibility:

Any Charity, Voluntary Group or Community Organisation operating within the parish that are of benefit to the local community, with the following two provisos:

- i, The Parish Council will NOT fund activities that it considers to be the responsibility of a Statutory Authority.
- ii, Applications from schools for an activity that takes place within the school day will not be considered.

The Parish Council will not fund activities outside its powers and functions, nor will it fund activities or services which are undertaken outside the Steyning Parish.

Submission of the Application:

1. Applications must be submitted to the Clerk via email or delivered to the Steyning Centre: Using and completing the grant application template attached.
2. Applications for grants over £250 should be supported by a copy of the latest set of annual accounts, these will be for the scrutiny of the Clerk and the F&GP Chair only.

SPC Grant Application

Organisation	Person responsible for financial Administration
Name	Name
Year of Formation	Telephone number
Current membership	Email address
Objectives (not more than 50 words)	Postal address

Steyping Parish Council has recognised there is a Climate Crisis and so it is desirable, though not essential, that your project, equipment, installation or other reason for funding focuses on one of the following - (please tick all that apply)
☐ Biodiversity - Rewilding to create more and better spaces for wildlife ☐ Carbon Reduction - Radically reducing carbon emissions ☐ Climate Resilience - Improving resilience to changing climate ☐ Energy - Transitioning to clean secure, affordable energy, or energy conservation ☐ Food - Developing a fairer or more sustainable food source ☐ Transport - Shifting to sustainable transport and improving air quality ☐ Waste Reduction - Reducing waste, increasing reuse, recycling and composting ☐ Water - Improving water quality and reducing consumption

Explain the purpose of your grant application and how this may benefit Steyping
Note - not more than 200 words + include pictures if possible of equipment to be funded, location etc to aid councillors understanding

Total anticipated cost of project / installation / other reason	Amount of Grant to be requested & when will it be required
£	£
Bank Account details for BACS Payment arrangements	
Bank Account Number -	Bank Sort Code - - -

- ☐ I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the above information is correct and that the grants eligibility criteria and the terms and conditions are complied with
- ☐ I confirm that I will submit updates to the Council informing how the Grant was used to improve Steyping

Signed Dated

Please return to the Council Office in person, by post or by email

Working Practices Group – SPC Councillor / Officer Protocol update

Briefing Note

On the 7th September @ 11.30 am the Working Practices Group met to deliberate and discuss a number of items, the review and amendment of the SPC 'Councillor/Officer Protocol' being one of them.

In attendance were Cllrs Norcross, Hanson, Ballance and S Alexander. Also present were the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Clerk explained the two main reasons for the proposed amendments.

First, the Personnel Committee had agreed the following recommendation at its meeting on the 22nd August '23

*Cllr Young **proposed, seconded** by Cllr M Alexander that the Chair and Vice Chair of Council will write a section to be included in the Officer/Councillor Protocol which, by way of an amendment, gives further guidance on what the Council needs to consider when forced to deal with vexatious, burdensome and disrespectful communications – and this to be taken to the Working Practices group. **Agreed***

Second, in order to comply in more detail with H-A implementation plan recommendations, and especially recommendations 2 and 13.

Recommendation 2 – Council should collectively agree what language is and is not appropriate in meetings and correspondence among councillors and with officers, Behaviour needs to be re-set to improve relationships to allow Council business to be transacted.

Recommendation 13 – The Council should have an agreed and enforced policy for dealing with persistent or vexatious correspondence to ensure that the business of the council is not unnecessarily diverted.

The amended draft 'SPC Councillor/Officer Protocol' follows this briefing note with all amended text contained only on page 10 and **in red** for members ease of reference.

All SPC Councillors had been sent the new draft document in advance of this meeting and asked to provide comments to assist the Working Practices group in their deliberations. These comments had been taken on board by those present and were part of the discussion that followed.

After consideration the group decided not to make any amendments to the draft provided, and they were then unanimously agreed upon the following decision.

Cllr Hanson proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance, to recommend to Full Council that the SPC Councillor/Officer Protocol amendments are accepted as per the supporting paper sent out to all councillors. **Agreed**



Steypning PC

COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL

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Agreed at Full Council on the 20th February 2023

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This Protocol covers:

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

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

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

Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

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

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

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

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

Officers can expect councillors:

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

Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees

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

Officers

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

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

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

Officers must:

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

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

In giving advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and

recommendations. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the officer's own. If a councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging his/her responsibilities.

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

The Relationship: General

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

Expectations

All councillors can expect:

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

Officers can expect from councillors:

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

Some general principles

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

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

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

COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

CORRESPONDENCE

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

Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

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

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

PRESS AND MEDIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Procedure for officers:

In normal circumstances - From time to time the relationship between councillors and the officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is important that the council adopts a formal grievance protocol or procedure. The principal council's monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role, or it may be necessary to seek independent advice. The chair of the council should not attempt to deal with grievances or work-related performance or line management issues on their own. The council should delegate authority to a small group of councillors to deal with all personnel matters. The law requires all employers to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. Adopting a grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems, or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way. Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the councillors' Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council's monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The council may however try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

In exceptional circumstances - If a councillor behaves in the following way:

1. Continually breaks SPC policy guidelines with impunity and without remorse
2. Brings SPC into disrepute by undermining its processes, procedures, or officers' integrity
3. Sends communications to officers which are overly burdensome or unreasonably vexatious
4. Frequently uses language in communications which is harassing, bullying, gas-lighting, intimidating, threatening or disrespectful either directly or indirectly to an SPC officer/s.
5. Is often within public meetings attempting to undermine the position of the clerk's office.

Then, in the first instance, the clerk needs to point out the nature of the problem, as he perceives it, to the councillor. If the councillor is not willing to modify his or her behaviour after several attempts by the Clerk and or other councillors, then the matter should be taken to the Personnel Committee for resolution.

If the Councillor does not abide by this committee's suggested resolution, then the Personnel Committee should meet once again and in this exceptional circumstance should resolve to allow the Clerk not to communicate nor open any communication with that councillor for a period of 4 months by way of undertaking its duty of care to that officer. This resolution should not be taken lightly, neither should it however be seen as a sanction, as indeed it is not possible for a council to impose sanctions upon a councillor no matter how extreme the behaviour might be. Rather, a clerk is allowed to not reply anyway, and so this merely formalises the situation. {This imposition should be termed 'respect resolution'}. After 4 months have elapsed, the councillor should be invited to meet directly with the Personnel Committee in order that modified behaviour be agreed upon, and a more collaborative working relationship put in place, then a line should be drawn, and normal practice resumed.

Procedure for councillors:

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the officer in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it should be taken to the SPC Personnel Committee for an impartial judgement and thereby resolution and it may be necessary to invoke the council's disciplinary procedure if that decision is in favour of the councillor's complaint. Either way, the Personnel Committee should agree upon a response to the Councillor and inform them of that decision – which should end the matter.

Obtaining the General Power of Competence

Item 8.12

Briefing Notes

At their July 11th meeting, the F&GP Committee agreed the following motion

Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Sharp, that F&GP request Full Council grant the Council the 'Power of Competence' at their earliest convenience. Agreed

With this in mind we have compiled the following information so that members and residents can understand what the 'Power of Competence' means if SPC decides that it wants to obtain it. {which it can do at this meeting if it so wishes}

The Freedom of the General Power of Competence {GPC}

Councils no longer need to ask whether they have a specific power to act. GPC (LA 2011 s1(1)) gives local authorities, including eligible local councils, "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" as long as they don't break other laws. It is a 'power of first resort'; this means that when searching for a power to act, the first question you ask is whether you can use GPC. To find the answer, you ask whether an individual is normally permitted to act in the same way. For example:

- An individual can't put someone in prison – and neither can a local council (although, like an individual, the council can press for a prosecution).
- An individual can't impose taxes on other people – so a local council can't use GPC to raise taxes.

on the other hand, an individual

- could run a community shop or post office (provided they abide by relevant rules) – so a local council can do likewise;
- can set up a company to provide a service. GPC clearly permits a local council to engage in commercial activity as long as it sets up a company or co-operative society (s4) for this purpose

Sometimes a council can do things that an individual can't do – such as creating byelaws, raising a precept or issuing fixed penalty notices – but it must do so using the specific original legislation. GPC does not mean that the council can delegate decisions to individual councillors – this is a procedural matter that remains enshrined in law.

The Government hopes that GPC gives local councils confidence in their legal capacity to act for their communities. It encourages councils to use this power to work with others in providing cost-effective services and facilities in innovative ways to meet the needs of local people. The council can lend or invest money; it can trade; it can even sell energy to the National Grid. If another authority has a statutory duty, then it remains their duty to provide that service (eg education, waste collection, social services) but local councils can still help out. For example, a local council can support a school in many ways, just as an individual might. It could even help a community trust to run a local school.

The council can undertake activities using GPC anywhere – not just in the parish (s1(4a)). It isn't necessary to worry whether the activity is for the benefit of the council, the area or the community (s1(4c)) although, in practice, parishioners might object if they can't see the benefit! And unlike the Local Government Act 1972, s137, it doesn't matter whether there are any other specific powers permitting the council to take action (s1(5)). So, for example, a council can use GPC to build a sports facility even though there is another power enabling it to do the same thing (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19).

As always, the council is expected to act in accordance with the general principle of 'reasonableness' established by the Wednesbury court case in 1948. The judgement made it clear that a council can exercise reasonable discretion when interpreting legislation provided that it justifies its decision in terms of relevant, rather than irrelevant, matters.

The Two Criteria for Eligibility

1. Elected Councillors

At the precise moment that the council resolves that it meets the criteria, the number of councillors elected at the last ordinary election, or at a subsequent by-election, must equal or exceed two thirds of its total number of councillors.

Elected councillors include all councillors who stood for election (including at a bye-election) whether or not the election was contested. Co-opted or appointed councillors do not count as they are not elected.

Elected councillors include all councillors who stood for election whether or not the election was contested. Co-opted or appointed councillors do not count as they are not elected.

The total number of councillors means the number of seats on the council including those that might be vacant. If two thirds is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up to the next whole number. For example, if the number of councillors in total is 8 and two thirds is approximately 5.3, then the number of councillors that must be elected is 6.

2. A Qualified Clerk

The clerk must hold at least one of the sector-specific qualifications and should have completed the relevant training designed as part of the National Training Strategy for local councils. From April 2012, this training is undertaken as part of a clerk's preparation for one of the recognised sector-specific qualifications. Where a clerk studied for one of these qualifications before April 2012, they undertake the relevant training and must pass **Section 7 in Isolation Module** in order to be fully qualified for the purposes of the GPC (see CiLCA Section 7 & GPC section at top of this page).

The recognised sector-specific qualifications are:

1. The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) awarded by Ascentis (or previously by Monitoring and Verification Board or the AQA). If the CiLCA certificate was awarded pre 2012, you must also hold GPC Section 7 in Isolation Module certificate.

2. Or one of the following higher education qualifications awarded by the University of Gloucestershire or its predecessor institutions, namely:

- The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Council Administration
- The first level of the Foundation Degree in Community Engagement
- The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy and Governance (the Level Four course)
- Any equivalent successor qualification

It is important that the council pays attention to the advice of its trained and qualified clerk when taking decisions to ensure that it acts lawfully.

Since GPC can be used for most of the activities of the council rather than for unusual one-off projects, the council cannot employ a clerk on a short-term contract specifically for using the power. If the council loses its qualified clerk or has insufficient elected councillors, then it must record its ineligibility at the next 'relevant' annual meeting of the council (after the ordinary election). If it has already started an activity under GPC for which there is no other specific power, it remains eligible for the purpose of completing that activity, but it can't start anything new under the power until it is in a position to make the formal decision that it meets the criteria. The council must go back to identifying whether it has a specific power to act and use the restricted s137 if there is no appropriate specific power. When entering into a contract under GPC, a council should be cautious if the contract lasts beyond the next annual meeting when the council might no longer be eligible to use GPC. There is a risk of legal action if the council ends the contract unexpectedly. It is wise to seek legal advice when setting up the contract.

Risks and Restrictions Limiting GPC

There are some risks associated with using GPC. Inadequate community support or insufficient funding are significant risks while there are several statutory or legal restrictions that a local council should consider before using the power. Clerks and councillors should be aware of the following restrictions that potentially could limit the use of GPC.

- If a council is already subject to a statutory duty, then that duty remains in place. So, for example, a local council that is eligible to use the GPC must continue to abide by its duties. For example:
 - The council has a duty to act with regard to the likely effect on crime and disorder and to do all it can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (Crime and Disorder Act 2006 s17).
 - The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 s40 imposes a duty on local councils to consider conserving biodiversity in exercising its functions.
 - The Smallholding and Allotments Act 1908 s23(1) gives councils a duty to provide allotments if they are of the opinion that there is a demand for them.
- There are also many procedural and financial duties that remain in place for regulating the governance of a local council.
- Furthermore, the council must comply with employment law, Health and Safety legislation, equality legislation and duties related to data protection and freedom of information for example.

- The council must set up a company or co-operative society if it wishes to trade. If the council sets up a company or co-operative society it must abide by company law. Councils are advised to refer to more detailed Government guidance on trading and on charging (see links below). The council can charge for services provided under GPC .
- Remember, if another authority has a statutory duty, then it remains their duty to provide that service (eg education). If you are worried that you might be encroaching on another authority's duty, then ask whether an individual, a private company or a community trust might be able to step in and help. If they can, then so can the local council (although it might need to set up an appropriate delivery body first).
- If the action the council wishes to take is also covered by a specific power then any restrictions that apply to the overlapping power are still in force. So if existing legislation requires the council to ask permission before acting, then it must do so. For example, the council asks permission from the Highways Authority before doing work on roadside verges.

GPC is a power and not a source of money. It cannot be used to raise the precept and if loans are needed then normal procedures apply. The council can seek other sources of finance such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, grant funding, sponsorship, commercial activity and agreements with other authorities. As always, the council should ensure support from local taxpayers.

So councils cannot use GPC primarily to raise money but they can receive income as a consequence of using the power for a different primary purpose. For example, a council could give financial assistance to a struggling local enterprise by purchasing share capital just as any individual could. Similarly the council could lend money to support a local activity and earn interest on the loan and it can raise sponsorship for a community project.

Although councils are encouraged to be innovative, they should be aware of the risks involved in using the power in addition to a lack of money or community support. For example:

- There is a risk of being challenged
- Trading activities could damage competing local activities

The council risks its reputation and public money if a project goes wrong.

Steering Group minutes - Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding 12th September 2023

Present: -

Clerk John Fullbrook - Steyning

Clerk Stephen Keogh – Upper Beeding

Cllr Di Goodall – Bramber

Cllr Jill Cannon – Upper Beeding

Cllr Simon Alexander - Steyning

Alison Page – Warden

Apologies: -

Clerk Paul Richards – Bramber

Michael Pearce - Warden

Warden's report and matters arising

JF likes the new report format and layout.

SA asked about youth provision given the demise of SCYP. CB advised that she would update members should she hear anything from HDC.

AP has contacted the head to Towers (as per the last SG mtg request) and is in communication with their community liaison contact.

Individual and Team warden objectives

AP talked about the fun day and around 60-80 people attended. JF thanked Ali and Mike for arranging the fun day and has asked if it can be incorporated into the Steyning festival.

AP said they are exploring the possibility of a monthly board game club with some intergenerational work. They have received some board games already from the charity Fresh Start.

AP mentioned the Dingemans social club which is up and running.

AP advised that they are going to hold a monthly drop in using the Farmers Market when they are on shift. They will source another venue too.

AP wishes to hold a drugs awareness talk in Steyning Primary School on 11th October. CB suggested contacting PC Sally Scott who is delivering a similar talk in another school.

AP will approach MADL (Made a Difference Locally) charity for funding for future projects.

JC asked about a monthly repair café?

Parish Council Priorities

AP wishes to run a poster competition in conjunction with the primary schools and asked SG members what they would like her and Mike to concentrate on. Members advised dog fouling and speeding. SA also asked if signs could be put on play parks to encourage people to look after the equipment and report ASB.

SA has asked for the Wardens to be prepared for the winter with no youth service provision.

SA mentioned an increase in cannabis. CB advised this everywhere at the moment and to continue encouraging residents to report to Police.

AP mentioned that there have been some positive outcomes re young people and cannabis use in the form of community resolutions.

HDC Priorities

As part of the community safety team, we will continue to concentrate on tackling ASB alongside the Police to help keep communities safe and to allow communities to thrive.

AOB

CB discussed the updated Terms of Reference for Steering Groups that she sent out recently to all Clerks. This was just to serve as a reminder that all PC decisions should go through the SG and they are to be the conduit for information flow between the PCs and the Wardens.

SA advised that he has got a scope of works and quotes coming for the CCTV in the High St.

CB advised that the CCTV system will have to be in house with Steyning PC and not placed in the Police Station beside AP and MP.

JC asked re parking in Church Lane in Upper Beeding. Advised there are no restrictions in the area so PC would have to apply for a TRO via WSCC.

JC asked about wildlife camera in play parks to capture ASB. CB advised to consult the Information Commissioners Office for more info. Link to follow in email.

SK asked about untaxed/dumped vehicles. Advice given re use of Operation Crackdown.

SA advised that the Xmas shopping event in Steyning is on Sunday 3rd Dec from 1200-1800. SA asked if there could be other Wardens to help out. CB advised she would ask.

DG – no

JF – no

AP - no

Next meeting is Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 1500 hrs at the Steyning Centre

Item 11.1

Dear Parish Clerk,

I would be grateful if you could share this email with your parish councillors.

I am writing to inform you that on 7th September, the Rampion 2 Development Consent Order (DCO) application for an offshore wind farm off the coast of Sussex, was accepted for examination by the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

We have carried out a huge programme of engagement and consultation over the past three years and have subsequently made changes to the project proposals in response to feedback from statutory consultees and the Sussex community and we thank the local communities in Sussex for taking the time to provide feedback on the project proposals to date.

The application being examined includes detailed proposals for the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm, the final Environmental Statement which sets out potential impacts and mitigations, and a Consultation Report which details the engagement and consultations carried out over the past three years and how the Project Team has taken account of the feedback received.

Situated to the west of the existing Rampion Offshore Wind Farm, Rampion 2, if consented, would include up to 90 turbines a minimum of eight miles offshore. An offshore export cable route would bring the power ashore under Climping Beach on the coast, and the underground cable route would continue inland to a new substation called Oakendene near Cowfold, then finally connect the power to the national electricity network at Bolney in Mid Sussex.

The Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm could generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of over one million homes and reduce carbon emissions by around 1.8 million tonnes. This means Rampion and Rampion 2 combined could power the equivalent of all of the homes in Sussex, twice over.

Now that the DCO application is accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate, in accordance with Section 56 of the Planning Act 2008, the Rampion 2 Project Team will publicise Notices of the accepted application in local and national newspapers, setting out how the community can register their opinions with the Planning Inspectorate. The public will be able to view the final proposals and register as an 'interested party' with the Planning Inspectorate at the Project Page of the Planning Inspectorate website at [Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm | National Infrastructure Planning \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/rampion-2-offshore-wind-farm/). Anyone wishing to be kept informed or to participate in the examination can register at the same website.

The Examination process is expected to take six months, and a final decision on whether consent will be granted will be made by the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero by early 2025.

Many thanks,
Chris

Chris Tomlinson
Development & Stakeholder Manager



RWE Renewables UK

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
Road Traffic Regulation Act Temporary Closure Notice
BRAMBER / UPPER BEEDING:
PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY NOS. 2933_1, 3139_1 & 3209
PUBLIC FOOTPATH NOS. 3139_2

NOTICE is hereby given that in pursuance of the provisions of Section 14 (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, the use of the route below is temporarily **prohibited**:

BRAMBER / UPPER BEEDING: PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY NOS 2933_1, 3139_1 & 3209; PUBLIC FOOTPATH NOS. 3139_2 as shown on the map accompanying this notice.

The path closure is necessary to protect public safety whilst **resurfacing works are undertaken on the Downs Link and South Downs Way either side of Botolph's Bridge**, with effect from **25 September 2023**.

This notice enacts a **21 day** closure from the date given above.

Unfortunately, there is no alternative route available using the Rights of Way network

Public Rights of Way Team (WSCC) - (01243) 777620 ;

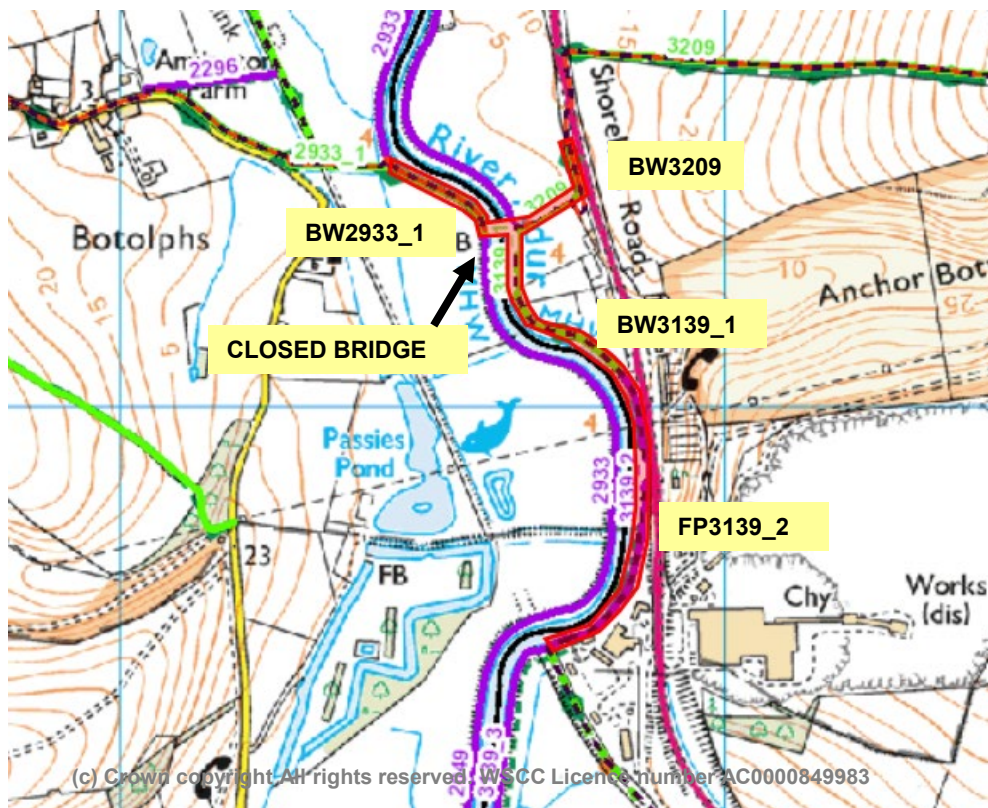
prow@westsussex.gov.uk

Matt Davery

Date: **12/09/2023**

Ref.: **LD/RW/I.42289**

Director of Highways ,Transport and Planning



SCALE
1:25000

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FAQs

4036 Whites Bridge

FP2776 Upper Beeding

15 September 2023 v4



Scheme: 4036 Whites Bridge
Type: Structure Replacement
Footpath: FP 2776
Parishes: Steyning and Upper Beeding
WSCC Local Member: Cllr Paul Linehan
Cabinet Member: Cllr Joy Dennis

Summary

Date: September 2023

Description of Work: In August 2023 an inspection was carried out on Whites Bridge and identified a number of significant defects to the main steelwork of the bridge.

The bridge was closed to foot traffic immediately. We plan to replace the structure.



Above image shows a screenshot from Earthlight with the blue and white marker showing the location of the structure.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the bridge closed?

A. A recent inspection of the structure identified a number of defects to the structure and the decision was taken to close the bridge on grounds of safety.

Q. What are the safety issues with the structure?

A. There are large areas of corrosion across the structure affecting its strength and ability to support the weight of people using the bridge.

Q. How regularly is this structure inspected?

A. All structures within West Sussex are inspected in line with the current code of practice. This usually means they have a General Inspection (GI) every two years and a Principal Inspection (PI) every 6 years. Whites Bridge last had a GI in 2020 and a Special Inspection was carried out in 2023.

Q. How long will the bridge be closed?

A. It is not currently thought appropriate to repair the bridge, therefore it needs replacing. This is a high priority for West Sussex County Council (WSCC), however it is not yet possible to give a timeline for the closure.

The matter is further complicated by the existence of a number of utilities. We are actively engaging with the owners of these utilities in order to proceed as quickly as possible.

The initial Rights of Way closure was for 21 days whilst we undertook the necessary process to enact a long-term closure for a further 6 months (up until March 2024). It is likely that a further long-term closure will be required beyond March 2024 whilst replacement works continue but at this time we cannot say how long this closure will be for. Whilst there is a temporary path closure in place on this bridge we would require people to respect the closure for the purposes of protecting public safety

Q. What works are being done?

A. It is likely we will be replacing the structure to ensure the Public Right of Way is fully accessible as previously.

Q. When will the replacement works take place?

A. We do not currently have a date scheduled for replacement but are working to undertake this work as soon as possible.

Q. I have not seen any activity on site, what is happening now?

A. There may be no work occurring on site at this point but please rest assured work is continuing in order to progress this project as swiftly as possible. The structure will be routinely inspected during its closure.

Q. Is there a diversion route in place?

A. WSCC does not provide a diversion route option. The map in this document shows a number of alternative routes that can be taken whilst this closure is in place.

Q. What environmental protection measures do you have in place during this work to ensure no detrimental effects on the wildlife, pond, and watercourse?

A. Before any construction works are undertaken, specialists will visit site and advise us of any necessary measures to protect flora and fauna and prevent pollution of the watercourse. Whilst works are ongoing all necessary precautions will be taken; this will include the use of emergency equipment such as Spill Kits.

Q. Is the landowner responsible happy with the works?

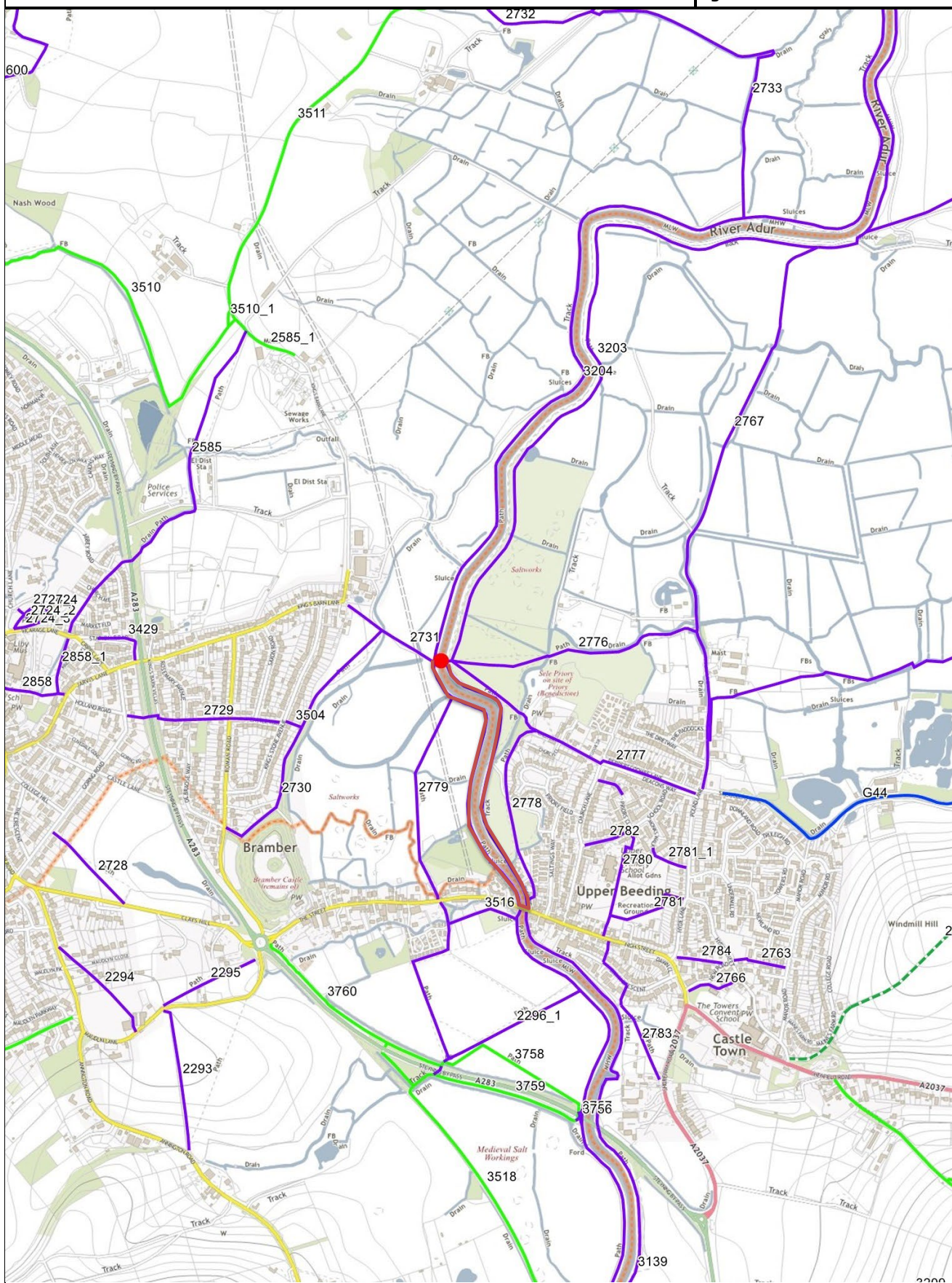
A. WSCC has fully engaged with the affected landowners and kept them fully informed regarding the proposed works and way of working. The landowners have been supportive, and we are grateful for their help and understanding.

Q. How do I report a fault or problem on the highway?

A. The most effective way to report a fault or problem on the highway is to use our reporting application with multiple options. For further information, please visit - [Make an enquiry or report a problem with a road or pavement.](#)

Parish:

Agenda Item No:



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FP2776 - White Bridge Closure

Plan:	1:10000
Date: 25 August 2023	

OS Sheet:	Grid Ref: TQ1909511320
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Photocopy
liable to
distortion

Matt Davey
Assistant Director
Highways, Transport
and Planning

