



ORDINARY MEETING
7.30pm 16TH JULY 2025
STOKE PRIOR VILLAGE HALL

MEETING PAPERS

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Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

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Councillors are summoned to an ordinary meeting of the Group Parish Council to be held on

**Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 7.30pm
in Stoke Prior Village Hall**

which will consider the business set out in the agenda below.

11th July 2025
Council

Allan Drew, Clerk to the
Council

AGENDA

49/25 Apologies for absence

To receive: any apologies for absence.

To consider, if necessary: excusing absence of members to the following meeting.

50/25 Declaration of interests and dispensations

To receive and record: any declarations of interest in agenda items in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted in July 2021.

To consider: any applications for dispensations in accordance with Standing Order 25.

51/25 Minutes of previous meetings

To approve: draft minutes of the meetings held on 21st May 2025

52/25 Chairman's announcements

To note: any announcements from the Chairman.

53/25 Update on Stoke Prior School by the Headteacher, Mr Matt Lucas

54/25 Public participation

Under Standing Order 8, any member of the public may make a statement or give evidence to the meeting on any business to be transacted or any other business, and ask or answer questions. At the discretion of the Chairman such participation may be permitted under the relevant agenda item.

55/25 District Councillor's report

To receive: a report from Ward Councillor Bruce Baker.

56/25 Planning Committee and planning applications update

(a) To consider for comment new applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council.

Ford & Stoke Prior

Two new applications to check if prior approval is required – 251565 Ford farm, HR6 0LE and 251435 Luce farm HR6 0RR. The determinations have already been made and PA is NOT required.

Humber

251590 New Barn, Gt. Marston Farm, Risbury, HR6 0NJ Application for prior approval to erect roof over manure heap.
Prior approval refused, planning application required.

251884 Land at Buckland farm, Docklow, HR6 0RU Conversion of redundant rural farm buildings to 8 dwellings. Demolition of existing farm buildings and erection of new farm buildings.

(b) To note: updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective). **Undecided.**

This application is due to be determined by Herefordshire Planning and Regulatory Committee. However, it is not on the latest posted agenda for the meeting of 4 July 2025. The Chairman has written to the Ward Cllr. expressing his concerns regarding the delay in determining a retrospective application.

The planning officer has provided an update précised as follows-

The retrospective planning application 223610 is currently under review, with a request for committee determination. This determination is likely to be conditional upon approval by the planning officer. An extension has been proposed until the end of September for the submission of additional documents, including a heritage statement and an aerial emission assessment. The applicant is preparing these documents to address outstanding issues. However, there is no guarantee that these submissions will resolve the technical concerns. Any required mitigation measures must be implemented upfront rather than through planning conditions

200705/251098 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm Stoke Prior. Application to lift conditions 3 & 4 of 200705 **Split decision C3 not upheld, C4 discharged**

204437 Plot 1 Land at Old Hall Stoke Prior HR6 0LH Proposed construction of a new self-build custom home and garage **Undecided - on hold due to phosphates**

Humber.

241806 Oak Tree View Risbury HR6 0NQ Proposed Conversion of Building to a self-build dwelling House **Undecided**

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses). **Undecided - on hold due to phosphates**

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648. **Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.**

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687. **Undecided**

193259 New House Farm Risbury HR6 0NQ Outline planning for proposed housing development on land at New House Farm. **Undecided**

57/25 General Financial Matters

To receive: Q1 bank reconciliation

To receive: a budget monitoring report for period 3 (June 2025)

To consider: payments for authorisation

58/25 Annual Business from Forward Plan 2025-26

To consider: adoption of new model Standing Orders as recommended by HALC Internal Audit

To consider: updates to all Council (non-GDPR) policies.

To resolve: Committees & Membership.

59/25 Lengthsman & PROW

To receive: current works schedule for Lengthsman

To consider: any additional activities to be added to current list of works

60/25 The Lamb Inn

To receive: any updates on The Lamb Inn

61/25 Current projects

To receive: updates on current projects

Traffic Management Plan Cllrs. Grace & Marston

Environment Cllrs. Yair & Hinton

62/25 Matters for discussion at the next meeting

Annual business from Forward Plan 2025-26

Date of next meeting

To note: the next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday 17th September 2025 at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior village hall

The Chairman will close the meeting

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Group Parish Council 21st May 2025
at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright (Chairman)

Cllr. Ken Bemand

Cllr. Richard Thomas

Cllr. Tim Yair,

Cllr. Clare Harris

Cllr. Rob Pugh

Cllr. Sarah Sneyd

Cllr. Janette Fullwood

Cllr. James Hinton

Cllr. Anne Grace

Ward Councillor Bruce Baker, Clerk & RFO: Allan Drew

Two members of the public attended.

First business

30/25 Election of Chairman

Cllr. Fowler-Wright was nominated and seconded and there were no other nominations for Chairman. Cllr. Fowler-Wright was re-elected unanimously and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

31/25 Election of vice-Chairman

Cllr. Hinton was nominated and seconded. There were no other nominations and Cllr. Hinton was re-elected unanimously

32/25 Apologies for absence

Cllr. Marston had sent his apologies

33/25 Declaration of interests and dispensations

None received

34/25 Minutes of the last meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2025 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

Any matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The Clerk reported he had been asked by the PCC via Ms Jackie Potter to raise the matter of Council making a contribution to the cost of servicing the church clock at St Lukes, Stoke Prior. After some discussion it was resolved that Council would offer to contribute half the cost of the service on the condition that the clock became fully functional again. The Clerk would write to the PCC.

35/25 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that-

Mr Chris Blum wished to step down from the position of Advertising Manager for The Pump. Council recorded its thanks to Mr Blum who had done an excellent job bringing in revenue particularly over the past year. A replacement was required and Councillors should pass on the details of anyone showing an interest to the Pump Editor (editorpump@hfspgroupparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Mrs. Margaret Brown, who had carried out sterling work in the Parishes over the years (joint editor of the Pump, distribution of the magazine, chief organiser of Community Week, treasurer of Risbury Village Hall and many other activities), also wished to retire from these duties. Council recorded its thanks for all the hard work she had put in over the years and recognised how difficult it would be to replace her.

36/25 Public participation

Members of the public present had nothing further to raise at this point but if appropriate would do so under relevant agenda items

Annual business – previous year

37/25 Annual reports 2024-25

a) *To receive:* a report from the past-Chairman-County Planning has still been held back by phosphate threats to the river Wye catchment area and slow decision making by planning and enforcement officers. The latter seriously impacted on the whole eventual acquisition of The Lamb. Nevertheless, at last, thanks to Mike Wyldes sterling persistent endeavours it now seems the community will regain its 'asset' of a fully open, functioning and hopefully thriving pub. Possibly in conjunction with a Community Benefits Society. The Government's very substantial increase in housing targets has scuppered Herefordshire Council's Draft Local Plan meaning until at least January 2028 HF&SP is likely to face some potentially unwanted, yet significant, planning applications.

The Trails booklet has been completed and given to every household and become part of the attractive Welcome Pack. Suggestions are always welcome on how to improve the Welcome Pack.

The parish website has been further developed.

The Transport Safety Group has established itself as an efficient meaningful data gathering and policy formulating organisation. What can be achieved is always challenged by costs, regulations and procedural delays but the TSG gives the GPC the best platform from which to start any traffic related projects.

The Pump newsletter continues to thrive thanks to numerous volunteers – especially distributors and the main editor Vicky Quinn Fraser. However, Chris Blum the Advertising Manager has moved away and we require a replacement to avoid significant financial losses.

Flooding has disrupted road traffic and has caused some major property damage. GPC reserve funds have been increased to help match fund future available grants as well as drive flood related projects such as recording and mapping the GPC drainage infrastructure.

A review of the existing Community Resilience Plan is well under way and will look to incorporate more relating to dealing with the impacts of flooding. A separate Flood Group is likely to be established.

Our valued Lengthsman resigned and we are seeking to find a replacement.

Overall despite an under staffed and under funded Herefordshire Council we seek to fire fight or more often flood fight whatever comes our way.

It would have been good to have named all the volunteers throughout the group parish but it would be a very long list and at risk of unwittingly missing someone – many volunteers do so quietly and often effectively unnoticed. However, it is clear that the sense of community and local quality of life exists and is considerably enhanced by the very many who give of their time, ability and not infrequently money to keep the many valued aspects of community life thriving – Community Week, two Village halls, three Churches, The Pump newsletter, PROW wardens, Area Emergency Wardens etc. Finally thank you to my fellow Counsellors – for those of you who have taken a lead on various projects or aspects of parish functioning, and of course to all of you for contributing to meetings.

b) *To receive:* a report from the Clerk
2024-25 was a year where Council moved forward in a number of areas, but there were also some set-backs. Last year I reported that the Localism agenda was really starting to take hold with Parishes being funded to carry out tasks normally the preserve of Herefordshire Council.

That trend has accelerated, with grant funding from Herefordshire extended from PROW & Lengthsman work to now include simple drainage improvements. Total funding in these areas is now in the region of £10,000 for the year, with the grant schemes likely to carry on for the next few years at least. In fact the contract for the

Lengthsman grants is already issued for 2025-26 and will probably be signed off by Council at this meeting. This is quite a step forward since, in past years, it has been July or later before this stage was reached. This means we can get on with work during the summer when the weather is more clement.

It is clear that drainage is an important concern with residents and at the meeting in SPVH on 11 December many voiced their concerns and highlighted the amount of work required to deliver flood prevention and mitigation. Council was reasonably optimistic that a significant impression could be made on the drainage issues – funding and plans were in place – but then a major set-back, the Lengthsman contracted to carry out the work resigned in January 2025 leaving us without the means to move forward. Although a contractor was found to carry out some work this was a small amount of our full plan and so far no-one has been prepared to take on the contract for Lengthsman work. However, some improvements have been made at Wheelbarrow Castle and at Risbury in the area of Low Brook. The search for a permanent Lengthsman continues!

Three Councillors carry out lead roles for drainage. Cllrs. Pugh and Bemand for Humber Parish and Cllr. Fulwood for Ford & Stoke Prior. Their help has been invaluable especially during the time when there was no Parish Lengthsman. A fourth Councillor – Cllr. Thomas – is often on hand advising and actually carrying out some work when the need catches his eye (and he has his shovel handy!)

Another consequence of the 11 December meeting was that Council decided to increase the precept for 2025-26 to create a substantial £10,000 reserve to deal with flooding. This reserve is ring fenced so will only be used for such work and puts Council in an excellent position to apply for match funded grants as and when these arise.

As a final piece of the jigsaw Cllr. Yair has attended a number of Flood Group meetings organised by Herefordshire (who have the lead for such matters) and this input will help guide the initiatives Council will take over the coming years. It seems likely that the long running Environment project lead by Cllrs. Hinton & Yair will merge with the Flood group.

Although drainage was perhaps the key topic for the year other important projects have gathered pace. Cllrs. Grace & Marston have built an extensive network of contacts in other Parish Councils to tackle road safety issues, primarily on the A44 Leominster to Bromyard, but increasingly into other hazardous roads and lanes in the Parishes. This Traffic & Road Safety group secured a £2,500 grant from the Police & Crime Commissioner to undertake traffic surveys on the A44. The grant enabled the collection of traffic data to justify a case for a speed limit reduction along parts of the A44. Other Councils have been involved, including Leominster Town Council, Monkland & Stretford (who contributed over £1,000 to the costs of the survey) and recently Bodenham where safety concerns about Bowley Lane have come to the fore.

Another completed project was Cllr. Fowler-Wright's creation of a set of footpaths and bridleways, described in excellent detail and illustrations by a beautifully crafted and informative booklet, Parish Walks. In producing this booklet, Cllr. Fowler-Wright was assisted by a team of residents and Councillors. This project, focussing on recreation and local history, is rather more uplifting and lighter than the serious matters of road safety and drainage and shows the wide range of activities that Council undertakes.

During the year two Councillors – Cllrs. Collins & Silk – resigned and were replaced by Cllrs. Sneyd & Harris. Council thanks those that left for their service to the community and welcomed the newcomers. Cllr. Sneyd has taken on footpaths in Ford & Stoke Prior and Cllr. Harris has become Council's representative on Risbury village hall.

The Pump goes from strength to strength and is now over three years old and has received much acclaim both within the Parishes and also further afield in neighbouring Parishes and villages. During the year a significant milestone was achieved. The advertising management, first held by Judith Burt and then Chris Blum, essentially achieved its budget for advertising sales. £2,487 was received against a budget of £2,500 and Chris is to be thanked for his great efforts over the past year. During the year the Pump cost £5,300 to produce so advertising now pays for nearly half these costs. Of course this success has been driven by Vicky and her hard-working team of volunteers who are all due our thanks.

c) *To receive:* reports from representatives on the Village Hall Committees.
Risbury Village Hall

In July last year we held an extraordinary general meeting to amend our Constitution. This was prior to our successful application for a Premises Licence for the serving of alcohol, which was granted in October. Naturally we have held several Pub Evenings this year, including one after our carol singing in the village street and a replacement for our Burns Night Supper. We have now introduced a regular slot for a Pub Evening on the last Friday of the month.

Regrettably the Oktoberfest had to be cancelled because of the indisposition of some of the musicians. We have, however, held two 'special' events: Our Big Breakfast in March and a VE Day celebration Cream Tea in May, which were both very well supported. A raffle at the latter event raised over £200 for the British Legion. We have also introduced regular coffee mornings on the second Wednesday of the month.

Work to the fabric of the hall this year has been repair, rather than improvement. We have reroofed the porch and redecorated the interior of the porch where water had penetrated.

Two committee members, Tonya Hales and Vicki Rolfe, have left due to other commitments, but we were delighted to welcome Carol Bowen and Clare Harris (our new Council representative) to join us. However, we would be very pleased to see yet more volunteers for our committee, so we can continue with a busy programme.

d) *To receive*: reports from PROW officers.

i. **Bridleways – Mr Iain Cholerton**

Mr Cholerton had produced his usual detailed and informative report which is published on the Council website. He also highlighted a number of issues which would benefit from immediate attention Suggested main action points for the PC in summary:

- Request Lengthsman clear undergrowth in summer months from the road at Witsetts to SP 28.1
- Replace a rotten gatepost at HU10.2
- Contact the landowners of Sheepcote to request they make good the approach to gate PG 11.2 which is flooded and muddy.
- Determine if encroachment onto SP 17 at Trap Cottage is legal and take appropriate action if it is not.

Mr Cholerton has produced his usual excellent report on the state of the Parish bridleways. It is a comprehensive report and is available on the Council website.

ii. **Ford & Stoke Prior footpaths – Cllr. Sarah Sneyd**

Stoke Prior and Ford Footpaths Officer Annual Report May 2025

Unfortunately, various commitments have meant that the inspection of **all** the footpaths in Stoke Prior and Ford is not fully complete; nevertheless, several have been walked in the last few weeks. The remaining footpaths will be inspected over the next two months. All will aim to be re-inspected before the 2026 report.

PROW	COMMENTS
SP1	Impassable following a landslide. There is no signage or entry to the path readily accessible or visible from the C1110 opposite the Lamb. Action is required to clear the route and install signage accordingly.
SP2	Initially, from the access road on C1112 at The Woodhouse, the FP is well signed, and stiles and gates are accessible. Nevertheless, upon reaching, traversing, and exiting the woodland area, the path becomes impassable, and the route's signage is missing. Action is required to clear the route.



SP4

Initially, from the access road on C1112 at The Woodhouse, the FP is well signed, and the landowner of this section is congratulated on the accessibility and clear routing through their property.



There is a broken post supporting the gate out of the walkthrough.



Once in the open fields, the footpath cannot be followed easily as signage stops, and there is a padlocked gate preventing further access.



Action is required to ensure the route is well signed and accessible, and the broken post should be replaced.

SP7

This footpath is clear, well-signed and has no defects.



SP9

This footpath is clear, well-signed and has no defects.



SP31

This footpath is initially well sign-posted, well maintained, and accessible; the landowner of this section is congratulated on the accessibility and clear routing through their property.



As the footpath enters farmland, the stile and bridge both have significant undergrowth surrounding them that needs clearing. The bridge immediately after the stile is ill defined and potentially hazardous. A much-needed handrail is present, which aids navigation.



Action is required to clear the undergrowth and ensure the bridge and handrail are adequate and low risk to footpath users.

From this point, signage is minimal, and there is no clearly defined route across the fields or around the woodland until just before crossing onto the golf club land, where there were two signs in the hedgerow. This section of the footpath was planted at the time of inspection.



On accessing the golf club land, over this stile, all signage ceased, and there was no clear route. This is where the footpath joins the FD4 path, which leads down to the end at Ford Farm on the C1113. There is a notice stating the footpath has changed route and that way markers are to be followed. However, no way markers were evident.



Action is required to improve the signage along the route, particularly across the field and around the edge of the woodland, to the point where it meets FD4. A clear path needs to be created across the field to ensure walkers are aware of the route to follow.

FD4

Upon accessing the golf course, where FD4 begins, a notice is displayed stating that the footpath has changed route and that way markers are to be followed. However, no way markers were evident.



Action is required to improve signage across the golf course.

SP3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 32A & 33

These footpaths have not been inspected since the current Parish Council Stoke Prior Footpaths Officer took over the role. However, there have been no reports of defects, accessibility issues, or poor signage from residents in the parish.

Sarah Sneyd

Footpaths Officer, Stoke Prior & Ford 16.05.2025.

iii. SUMMARY OF HUMBER FOOTPATHS DEFECTS FROM MAY 2025 REPORT

Persistent Defects

Despite Previous Alerts the officer highlights that many of the issues noted in previous reports (particularly in 2021, 2023, and 2024) remain unaddressed. Both landowners and the Lengthsman have not made sufficient progress on the repairs. The lack of a clear, coordinated action plan is emphasized, with a recommendation for the Parish Council to assign responsibilities and possibly mobilize a volunteer group to handle minor tasks such as vegetation strimming, while reserving more technical repairs (like fixing stiles) for professionals.

Structural and Safety Concerns on Specific Routes

HU3 (Humber to Humber Close, Steens Bridge): This path is described as “passable with major defects.” Key problems include:

A damaged and unsafe stile/gate at the southern end that requires repair.

A section between the stile and Bridge 2 where the path margin is insufficiently maintained, risking complete impassability.

A dangerous Bridge 2 with rotten planks, which has been problematic for several years.

Overgrown stiles (4 and 5) and a completely broken stile (6) near Humber Close that have been identified since 2021.

HU6 (Stirbridge Farm to Humber Close, Steens Bridge): The route is “passable with difficulty.” Major issues include:

A badly broken stile (Stile 1) and another completely broken stile (Stile 6) that makes access problematic.

Even though some segments have improved, the field margin between Stile 9 and Humber Close remains overcropped.

PG12 (Marston to Holly Brook): This path is labelled as “passable with extreme difficulty.” Critical hazards include:

An undefined, hazardous route through a wooded area between Stile 4 and Stile 5, which needs clearance of undergrowth, removal of saplings, and clear waymarker posts.

Fallen trees between two gates that obstruct the path, and a completely impassable official route through woodland due to wire fencing, despite the existence of an alternate lane that legally cannot be waymarked.

Signage and Waymarker Inadequacies In several instances, necessary signage is missing or inadequate:

At HU13, the fingerpost sign at Gate 1 needs straightening and a support, along with vegetation clearance.

At HU7, although a new pedestrian gate has been installed, there is no waymarker post to properly identify the Public Right of Way (PROW).

General Maintenance and Vegetation Problems Across multiple paths, overgrown vegetation is a recurring problem:

Paths have sections that are either overgrown to the point of making the route difficult (such as the cropped margins along HU3 and HU6) or completely obstruct the passage (such as between stiles on PG12).

Fallen trees and excessive undergrowth continue to pose safety risks and contribute to the poor condition stated in the report.

Lack of Progress on Recommended Diversions and Safety Measures

Where alternative safer routes have been proposed—such as a diversion around a water treatment plant or the administration of warning signs—the report notes that little to no progress has been made. Residents have even started using unofficial alternative routes, which further complicates ensuring safe navigation on the designated PROWs.

Overall, the document serves as a call to action for a more systematic and accountable approach to maintaining footpaths. The ongoing lack of remedial work on critical infrastructure and the recurring nature of the defects underline an urgent need for the Parish Council to step in and establish a well-defined maintenance and improvement plan.

The Clerk reported that Herefordshire grant funding is already published for 2025-26 and that he would welcome a short note from the PROW officers with a brief description of the key issues along with a location and, if possible, a photograph. Any further information provided along with these comprehensive reports will be worked into a program for the new Lengthsman to tackle as an early priority.

e) *To receive:* a report from the Community Week committee

The following report has been provided by Margaret Brown

We had a very successful week and the weather, on the whole, was not too bad – at least all outside events were able to go ahead. It was lovely to see so many people from all over the group parish (and all ages) at one or other – or even most – of the various events. The entries for the Scarecrow Competition, which was judged by our District Councillor Bruce Baker, were of a very high standard. Many thanks to the setters of the quiz and treasure hunt and all those who contributed so much to organising each event. It was great to have so many people actively involved in this.

We plan to move Community Week back to early August in 2025, because combining it with the Hog Roast and Risbury Show meant too much work for the organisers and too many events in a short time for everyone.

In addition to Community Week, the group also ran the Risbury Show, which was very well attended this year and the Pumpkin competition.

38/25 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for 2024-25

i. *To receive:* a report from the Responsible Financial Officer

- The poor winter weather played a large part in the finances of the Council during the year. The drainage problems moved centre stage driven by high and concentrated rainfall over several months. Council concluded that it was prudent to increase the precept to create a drainage reserve of £10,000. The precept rose from £15,344 to £22,696 a rise of 48%. Such a rise reflects the level of residents' concerns around flooding and it is noteworthy that as far as is known there have been no complaints about such a significant increase.
- The precept accounted for almost exactly 50% of all income the Council received. This level is a falling share of total revenue year on year and demonstrates the rise in grant income and Pump advertising.
- Overall, grant funding of £6317 was nearly double that of 2023-24 . The result would have been even higher had the Lengthsman been available to spend the extra funding that could have been obtained.
- Due to the high expenditure in 2023-24 the VAT reclaim was significant at £2097.
- As a result of all the above factors there was a year end surplus of £2300 compared with an expected deficit of £1644. This result was due mostly to reduced spending on Lengthsman activities.
- As a measure of financial activity the RFO has recorded the following number of transactions in the Council accounts over the years-

Year ended	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Transactions	72	62	74	49	82	122	121	117

This level of financial activity is very similar to the previous two years and has again resulted in Council exceeding the arbitrary threshold of £25,000 for expenditure. As such the accounts are subject to a Limited Assurance Review by the External Auditor

ii. To approve: the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS				2024-25		
		OUTTURN 2022-23	OUTTURN 2023-24	BUDGET 2024-25	OUTTURN 2024-25	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET
1	Precept	12289.00	15000.00	15322.00	15322.00	0.00
2	Pump Advertising	575.00	2391.00	2500.00	2487.00	-13.00
3	Pump Postage	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00
4	Grants	0.00	7729.00	2400.00	6317.63	3917.63
5	Other Income	115.12	108.06	500.00	3104.00	2604.00
6	VAT Reclaim	0.00	2751.62	2073.00	2097.15	24.15
7	CW Fundraising	2070.18	300.45	300.00	695.38	395.38
8	Other Projects	2080.00	0.00	0.00	250.00	250.00
9	TOTAL INCOME	17169.30	28320.13	23135.00	30313.16	7178.16
EXPENDITURE						
10	Clerk	4403.50	4343.36	4919.00	4969.68	-50.68
11	Administration	445.88	411.66	500.00	1025.14	-525.14
12	Insurance, audit, professional	887.38	1235.32	1200.00	1294.64	-94.64
13	Website & IT	155.00	451.99	500.00	553.49	-53.49
14	Hire of Halls	200.00	167.00	200.00	210.00	-10.00
15	Training and development	0.00	229.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Equipment	1065.22	890.50	100.00	654.93	-554.93
17	Maintenance	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
18	HMRC	733.60	1105.24	1300.00	3557.73	-2257.73
19	Other	86.00	579.13	100.00	1738.87	-1638.87
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	7976.57	9413.56	8869.00	14004.48	-5135.48
PROJECTS						
21	War Memorial	5678.00	403.00	60.00	60.00	0.00
22	Parish Pump	4260.00	5338.88	4000.00	5350.00	-1350.00
23	Lengthsman	6271.00	9095.00	5400.00	355.00	5045.00
24	Community Week	1933.00	435.00	450.00	496.67	-46.67
25	Environment Project		0.00		0.00	0.00
26	Road Safety		500.00	5000.00	4958.98	41.02
27	Welcome pack		516.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
28	Trails Booklet			1000.00	821.00	179.00
29	Project B			0.00	0.00	0.00
30	Project C			0.00	0.00	0.00
31					0.00	
32	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	18142.00	16288.28	15910.00	12041.65	3868.35
33	Reclaimable VAT on the above	2110	2072	1800	1966.97	166.97
	VAT from 2023-24					
34	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	26118.57	25701.84	24779.00	28013.10	-1100.16
35	SURPLUS	-8949.27	2618.29	-1644.00	2300.06	3944.06

NOTES FOR STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024-25	
1	As agreed at meeting 7 February 2024
2	An excellent result with budget essentially achieved
3	Nominal amount
4	Lengthsman scheme updated to include £2376 base grant & £1188 match funded Nominated Task. Drainage grant of £3100 also included. Other drainage grant monies of £3600 has also been allocated but will be paid directly by HFC so has not been included here. £2465 from WM Police now received. (Note: also includes £3852 from 2023-24)
5	Donation of £1479 for purchase of gazebos and £1225 from Monkland PC included.
6	As 2023-24 outturn
7	
8	Trails project £250 for advertising in the Parish Walks booklet.
9	
10	Increased due to move to SP26 but no real increase in net salary
11	
12	Increased payment to internal auditor (£50 up to £200).
13	Increased cost for .GOV website (But also includes some billed arrears from Gwent web design)
14	
15	
16	Salt boxes and sandbags
17	
18	Increased due to salary award to SP26 and move to higher tax band
19	Now includes gazebos from donation line 5, wreaths
20	
21	Engraving for S. Preece (Price)
22	Prices have risen by about £30/issue. Reducing pages trend not maintained.
23	£5600 grants + £2000 Parish spend. Spend much reduced by Lengthsman resignation
24	Estimate similar to 2023-24
25	No spend last year. Council to agree way forward on this project.
26	Budget raised to £5000 following Police grant. Traffic Data invoices now included.
27	Project closed
28	Project completed, invoices now included.
29	
30	
31	
32	
33	
34	
35	

The RFO reported that despite some set backs the year had ended fairly well with a small surplus. Not as much Lengthsman work had been achieved as hoped but a few tasks had been completed.

iii. To approve: the Bank Reconciliation Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Financial Year 2024-25

Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31/03/2025

Prepared by Allan Drew (RFO)	Date:	09/04/2025	£	£
Balance from Bank Statements				
Unity Trust current account dated	31/03/25	Balance as at 31/03/2025		3920.91
Petty cash in hand		As at 31/03/2025		<u>0.00</u>
				3920.91
Less unrepresented items				
			0.00	<u>0.00</u>
Plus receipts not banked/cleared				
			0.00	<u>0.00</u>
				<u>0.00</u>
		Net balance at 31/03/2025		3920.91

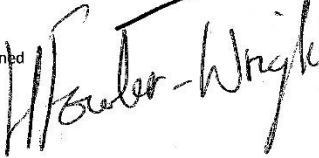
The net balance reconciles to the cash books for the year to 31/03/2025 as follows:

Balance in current account cash book				
Opening balance at 01/04/2024			1620.85	
Add: receipts to 31/03/2025			30313.16	
Less: payments to 31/03/2025			<u>28013.10</u>	
		Net balance at 31/03/2025		3920.91

Balance in petty cash book				
Opening balance at 01/04/2022			0.00	
Add: receipts to 31/03/2025			0.00	
Less: payments to 31/03/2025			<u>0.00</u>	
		Net balance at 31/03/2025		0.00

All Cash Books		Net balance at 31/03/2025		3920.91
Difference				0.00

Signed:  RFO Date 09/04/2025

Countersigned:  Councillor Date 21/5/25


(and cllr)

21/5/25

Council was also provided with the relevant bank statements to confirm the details shown on the reconciliation. The Chairman and an independent Councillor (Cllr. Yair) then countersigned the reconciliation.

iv. To consider: the Internal Audit Report and checklist

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Humber, Ford and Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

<https://hfspgroupparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No	Not covered
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		✓	
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).		✓	
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

23/04/2025 28/04/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

HALC Audit Services

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

HALC Audit Services

Date

28/04/2025

If the response is "no" please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

Note: If the response is "not covered" please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

The RFO explained that the non-compliances noted on lines M & N were due to the Council website not having been properly updated with the details following completion of the Limited Assurance Review for 2023-24. (The details of the unaudited accounts were correctly published in June 2024). The RFO was unable to explain why the website had not updated but speculated that it might have been that the second SAVE command for the new website had been omitted. The corrective action is now to check on an independent device that the website has been properly updated.

v. To approve: the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31 March 2025

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		Yes' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.		✓	during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

21/5/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

38/25 (e)

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair: *[Signature]*
 Clerk: *[Signature]*

Information required by the Transparency Code (not part of the Annual Governance Statement)		
	Yes	No
The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.	✓	

WWW.HFSPGROUPPARISHCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

Both Council and the Internal Auditor were satisfied that, with the exception of line 4, the internal control mechanisms were satisfactory and the Chairman signed the Governance Statement.

vi. To approve: the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

HUMBER FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	3,827	1,621	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	15,000	15,322	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	10,740	14,991	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	5,448	8,527	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	22,498	19,485	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,621	3,921	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,621	3,921	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	18,945	19,544	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

[Signature]
Date 09/04/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

21/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

38/25 (f)

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]

The Accounting Statement could be reconciled to the Council cash book and statement of accounts and so were shown to be correct. The Chairman then signed the Accounting Statement 2024-25.

vii. *To approve*: the Period for Exercise of Public Rights for the year ended 31 March 2025

When all financial aspects of last year have been completed and agreed (which should be during the Annual Meeting) a Notice of Public Rights must be posted. This Notice informs all citizens that they have the right, on reasonable notice, to inspect all the financial information from the previous year. The Notice runs for a period of 30 working days and must include the first 10 working days in July.

The RFO recommended that this year the period runs from Tuesday 3rd June 2025 until Monday 14th July 2025 inclusive. Council agreed this recommendation.

ix. To note: the accounts for 2024-25 will be subject to a Limited Assurance Review by the external Auditor as Council income/expenditure for the year is above the £25,000 threshold.

39/25 Forward Plan for 2025-26

Over the past five years the number of reviews, checks and required new content for the Council has grown significantly. As a direct result the scope and length of this Annual Meeting has increased accordingly. The Chairman has now concluded that a meeting of this length and complexity is no longer an effective way to run Council business.

Apart from matters of governance and annual financial results there is no legal requirement to cover all the other matters at the May meeting. The Clerk proposed that nearly all remaining business from the May meeting can be managed at meetings throughout the rest of the Council year. To enable this process a Forward Plan has been created to show which elements of Annual Business will be covered at which meeting

The draft Forward Plan for 2025-26 follows. Council felt that this approach made for easier management of Council business through the year and the Plan was adopted for the remainder of 2025-26.

HFSP GROUP PARISH COUNCIL – DRAFT FORWARD PLAN 2025-26

Meeting	May 2025	July 2025	September 2025	November 2025	January 2026	March 2026
Topic	Governance	Policies & Procedures (1)	Policies & Procedures (2)	Finance (1)	Finance (2)	Risk & Insurance
Annual Items	First business. Annual reports. End of year. Internal audit. AGAR. Notice of Public Rights.	Standing Orders. Non GDPR Policies. Committees & Membership.	Financial Regs. GDPR Policies. Roles of Councillors.	Draft budget. Projects. Reserves. Banking.	Final budget. Precept. Projects for coming year.	Assets. Risk register. Insurance policy cover. Meeting dates for coming year.
Recurring Items	Qtr. 4 + Annual Bank Reconciliation. Ordinary business.	Qtr. 1 Bank Reconciliation. Ordinary business.	Ordinary business.	Qtr. 2 Bank Reconciliation. Ordinary business.	Qtr. 3 Bank Reconciliation. Ordinary business.	Ordinary business.

Ordinary Business is-

Apologies, Declarations of Interest, Approval of draft minutes, Chairman's announcements, District Councillor's report, Planning applications, General Financial matters, Lengthsman, PROW, Drainage & Flood Group, Current Projects

NOTE: Exceptionally for May 2025, assets, risks and insurance must be covered since the insurance renewal date is 1st June 2025. Meeting dates for 2025-26 also must be agreed. From July 2025 the Plan can be followed as shown.

b) *To receive and approve:* an updated Risk Assessment and Management document

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL - RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT Updated (in italics) April 2025

Risk scores – Low 0-3 Green: Medium 4 – 6 Orange: High 7 - 9 (Red)

Area	Risk	Impact	Likelihood (1-3)	Impact (1-3)	Risk	Notes	Control (<i>and agreed improvements</i>)
Assets	Damage to or theft of physical assets in public places.	Cost of repair and replacement	2	2	Medium (4)	The Council has limited physical assets (see Asset Register), and does not own its own premises. Public Access Defibrillator at Risbury Village Hall, and Clerk's laptop taken to meetings.	Insurance policy through Zurich Municipal includes sufficient All Risks cover (£20,000) from 01/06/25.
	Damage to or theft of physical assets and supplies in Clerk's home		1	2	Low (2)	Only items of significant value are the laptop.	Fire alarms and locks fitted to premises. Zurich insurance policy cover includes all assets for All Risks.
	Deterioration of physical assets		2	1	Low (2)	Benches installed in 2009 – no regular maintenance required. Defibrillator installed at RVH.	Other street furniture inspected regularly by Lengthsman or Clerk and any repairs to be funded from reserves. Weekly checks of defibrillator made by Clerk and recorded.
Finance	Loss of investments and savings	Financial loss	0	3	NIL	<i>Current account with Unity Trust (balance of up to £10,000)</i>	All balances covered by government bank guarantees.
	Loss or theft of cash or cheques		1	1	Low (1)	All cheques banked promptly. Small sums of petty cash (max £100) sometimes held.	Cheques insured for £250,000, cash for £5000 in transit or in a safe; cash for £500 not in a safe at Clerk's or councillor's premises or at events.
	Loss of income		1	2	Low (2)	Most income is precept from Herefordshire Council or delegated funding. The Pump advertising collection has been strengthened	Insurance not required, as main income is precept, levied by statute. RFO monitors Editor's collection of advertising income;
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty		1	1	Low (1)	Only small cash sums handled routinely. Community Week is only event handling sums over £100. Most Pump advertising paid by cheque or BACS.	Receipts obtained/issued for all cash transactions. Cash banked within 48 hours using paying-in slips. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance in place (£25,000 from 1 June 2018) adequate for level of risk

	Errors in financial controls and records or financial loss through dishonesty or fraud by Council officers or councillors.		1	2	Low (2)	Invoices, cheques, cash books, receipts and bank statements managed by RFO. <i>Currently nearly all payments made by internet banking, requiring two authorisations (nominated councillors).</i> Limited number of payments made by direct debit where no alternative given.	Bank reconciliations prepared by RFO, reported to Council with bank statements and signed by nominated councillor each quarter. All receipts & payments recorded on numbered vouchers. Invoices/vouchers inspected and countersigned by cheque signatories. List of payments authorised by Council and signed off by Chairman. Two signatories on cheques. Internal audit of cash books, receipts, statements etc undertaken in April. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance in place (£25,000) against fraud by RFO/Clerk or councillor.
	Non-compliance with VAT Regulations	Financial penalties and loss	1	2	Low (1)	Council not VAT-registered but can reclaim non-business VAT.	VAT accounted separately in cash books and accounts. VAT reclaim for previous financial year made each summer.
	Poor budgeting to underlie annual precept	Inadequate finance for required functions	1	2	Low (2)		Precept estimation is now on a more robust footing and improved spreadsheet automation has made budgeting system much less prone to human error.
	Non-compliance with borrowing restrictions	Penalties and requirement to cancel or repay borrowing	1	0	Nil	No borrowing at present.	If borrowing required, a business plan will be prepared and submitted through HALC for approval, and all borrowing conditions complied with.
	Misuse or loss of debit card	Financial loss	1	0	Nil	Council does not hold a debit card	Fidelity Guarantee Insurance in place (£25,000 from 1 June 2018) adequate for level of risk.
Public Liability	Legal liability arising from Lengthsman work	Financial loss and reputational damage	1	3	Low (3)	Minor highway maintenance work undertaken through independent contractors under delegated powers from Herefordshire Council. Council and contractors required to have £5m liability insurance.	Public liability insurance of £10m, and contractors required to provide to Parish Council a copy of insurance certificate of £5m liability insurance.

						Contractors asked to confirm in writing they have undertaken required training and have appropriate equipment.	
	Legal liability arising from accident at events or activities		2	3	Medium (6)	Community Week events: Guidance provided by insurers about specific risks (eg bonfires). Voluntary activities (eg litter picking).	Confirmation obtained annually from CW Committee that proposed events covered under Council's Public Liability insurance (£10m). Assessment of any new events undertaken. Written risk assessment and plan prepared by Clerk prior to CW activities and any activity using volunteers.
	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership		1	3	Low (3)	Few physical assets, unlikely to give rise to liability, with exception of public access defibrillator.	Public liability Insurance in place (£10m). At least annual inspection of physical assets for safety/maintenance by Clerk, reported to Annual Meeting. Defibrillator registered with WMAS and inspected weekly/monthly by Clerk; no liability if checked and ok.
	Libel or slander by councillors or employees		1	3	Low (3)		Official council publications/documents approved by Clerk and Chairman or nominated councillor. Insurance (£100,000) in place from 1 June 2018.
	Negligent act or error by employee or councillor including unauthorised disclosure of personal data		1	3	Low (3)	GDPR in force 25 May 2018..	Officials' Indemnity insurance covered under Public Liability cover from 1 June 2018. GDPR compliance Action Plan in place.
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with Employment Law	Financial penalties	1	2	Low (2)		Membership of HALC and SLCC to keep up-to-date with requirements.
	Non-compliance with HMRC requirements	Financial penalties	0	2	NIL	Autela handles all HMRC issues	.
	Safety of staff, councillors and public at meetings or events	Legal action with financial loss and reputational damage	1	3	Low (3)	Meetings held on hired premises covered by premises' insurance.	Employer's Liability insurance (£10m) in place.

<i>Personal Accident</i>	<i>Assault on staff or others carrying cash</i>	<i>Financial loss and harm to staff</i>	1	2	Low (2)		Personal Accident (Assault) cover provided under Money insurance. However no cash handled by Council in last 3 years. (New risk established at meeting 17 May 2023)
	Accident to staff or councillors whilst carrying out duties	Claim for damages and harm to councillors	1	3	Low (3)		Personal Accident insurance in place.
Legal Liability	Council acting beyond legal powers	Challenge to actions, with consequential financial loss and reputational damage	1	3	Low (3)	Limited range of activities and responsibilities. Council has General Power of Competence, to be renewed at Annual Meeting in 2023.	All expenditure items have specific legal authority identified in payments schedule. Clerk clarifies legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary.
	Inadequate Minutes and documents recording authority to act		1	2	Low (2)	Council meets two-monthly. Committees meet as required,	Draft minutes circulated to members and approved at next meeting. Minutes made available to press and public on website
	Inadequate document control		1	2	Low (2)	No important legal documents or leases/deeds held. Minutes on numbered pages in loose-leaf minute books.	Minutes signed/initialled by Chairman. Electronic copy of minutes since 2010 on computer and off-site back-up.
Councillor propriety	Conflicts of interest by councillors	Challenge to actions, with consequential financial loss and reputational damage	2	3	Medium (6)	Legal requirement for councillors to complete/submit Register of Interests to county Monitoring Officer. Code of Conduct adopted. Standing Orders specify policies and procedures in line with legislation.	Code of Conduct provided to all councillors. Clerk ensures councillors submit Register of Interests and retains copy. All Councillors reviewed and updated their register of interests following May 2024 Annual Meeting Agenda item at Annual Meeting reminding councillors of duty to keep Register up to date, Clerk ensures Standing Orders followed. Council reviews any changes to legislation and required changes to Standing Orders at least annually at Annual Meeting.
	Gifts and hospitality to councillors		1	2	Low (2)	Legal requirement to declare gifts and hospitality received	Code of Conduct provided to all councillors.

Legal expenses	Costs of legal proceedings	Unexpected financial loss	1	3	Low (3)		Legal Expenses insurance in place (£100,000 from 1 June 2018)
Staffing	Loss of services of Clerk/RFO temporarily	Inability to act or meet legal obligations; loss of financial controls.	2	2	Medium (4)	Council's sole employee and officer. Often away on other business.	Use temporary qualified Clerk service from HALC. Seek to appoint Deputy Clerk to act temporarily from time to time, at least to clerk meetings or undertake essential tasks. Deputy Clerk briefed and trained by the Clerk in main aspects of the Clerk and RFO roles.
	Loss of services of Clerk/RFO permanently		1	3	Low (3)	Council's sole employee and officer.	In interim, use temporary qualified Clerk service from HALC. Appoint any Deputy Clerk as Acting Clerk with assistance from HALC, or pay HALC to provide a qualified person to be Acting Clerk with the Deputy Clerk supporting. Advertise for permanent replacement.

The register has been fully revised including a correction to the scoring system. The scoring system uses Risk =Likelihood x Impact. Impact and likelihood are scored on a scale of 1, 2 or 3 where 1 is low and 3 is high. So risk is evaluated from 1 to 9. On the register 1 – 3 is categorised as Low, 4 – 6 as Medium and 7 – 9 as High. Note that this method can only result in risks scored as 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 9.

There are assessed to be no RED risks following mitigating actions for all risks listed. The main issue for insurance purposes remains the Community Week activities which are rated AMBER and will require a risk assessment before the Community Week place but after the nature of all the events has been decided.

In these circumstances the Clerk was able to advise Council that the insurance cover proposed for 2025-26 was adequate to cover the mitigated risks identified in the register.

Council should review the register and make any changes it thinks necessary

c) *To receive and consider:* the RFO's report and recommendations on Insurance

The purpose of the insurance review is to establish that the risks identified from the register, along with mitigating actions are suitably covered by the insurance policy. The main area of concern in recent years has been the cover for property, that is the fixed assets of the Council. The Clerk has secured a policy update from Zurich which has increased the cover for property to £18,000 but has asked for that to be further increased to £20,000. (Current estimated value of property is £18,393).

Apart from property cover and public liability all other cover levels are the same as previously. (Public liability has increased from £10m to £12m).

Property, all risks	£18,000
Money – cheques & in safe	£250,000
Money – elsewhere (in custody / not)	£5000 / £250
Employer liability	£10,000,000
Public liability	£12,000,000
Fidelity guarantee	£25,000
Libel and slander	£100,000
Personal accident compensation	£20,000 /£50 per week
Legal expenses	£100,000

These cover levels are satisfactory for a Council of this size and activity.

The premium however, from 1 June 2025 renewal, has increased from £167 to £472. In view of this price increase other quotations are being sought. The Clerk requests that he is granted delegated authority to renew the insurance with a supplier he thinks best fits Council's needs, up to a maximum of the Zurich renewal premium of £472.

Note: after the meeting the Clerk was advised by the alternative insurer that they could not offer a competitive quotation. The insurance was therefore renewed with Zurich for the premium of £472

41/25 Dates of meetings for 2025-26

Under the normal rules (third Wednesday of each alternate month from May 2025 the following dates were agreed- Wednesday 16 July 2025, Wednesday 17 September 2025, Wednesday 19 November 2025, Wednesday 21 January 2026, Wednesday 18 March 2026, Wednesday 20 May 2026 (Annual Meeting) all at 7.30pm.

In line with past arrangements the May 2026 meeting will be held in Risbury as will the January 2026 & March 2026 meetings. The July, September and November 2025 meetings will be held in Stoke Prior Village Hall.

Ordinary business

42/25 District Councillor

Cllr Baker reported that-

- Herefordshire Council would be introducing a scheme over the next 12 months to collect garden waste and food waste. The food waste would be collected free of charge. Garden waste would be collected for a charge of £60/year. Neither scheme would be compulsory. Additionally small domestic batteries and electrical items can now be accepted as waste by placing in a plastic bag and attaching to the bin.
- The road re-surfacing scheme continues for 2025-26. It is planned that £12.5m will be spent compared with £11m in 2024-25.
- The drainage problems continue but the grant to Parish Councils to carry out simple local drainage works will be continued.
- OFSTED has completed a further inspection of Children's Services and it is understood that the service will be rated GOOD. Adults' Services will be inspected later in the year.
- The contract to create a transport hub at Hereford Station has been let.
- There is a re-cycling scheme at Hereford Crematorium which removes any metal parts from bodies prior to cremation. Last year this generated £24m in scrap metal sales and was donated to charities.
- A scheme to help elderly people stay longer in their own homes has been launched. This involves an on-line virtual house which can highlight risks and help elderly people cope better with these risks. There is more information at this site [TEC Virtual House showcases a range of assistive tech for people with various health conditions - AT Today - Assistive Technology](#) or you can visit the virtual house here- [Care providers and housing options – Herefordshire Council](#)
- The Government's Devolution proposals have quietened of late, perhaps due to the work of the Boundary Commission which will report on changes before the 2027 election.
- The Avian flu housing order has been lifted.

- Major road works are planned for the A49 south of Hereford. (However, despite considerable searching no detail about timing or location could be discovered on the web).

43/25 Planning Committee and Planning updates

To consider for comment: new applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council

Ford & Stoke Prior

251098 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm, Stoke Prior.

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 & 4 attached to planning permission 20070

Note: Condition 3 (Orchard management) has NOT been discharged. More information requested. Condition 4 (Materials) has been discharged.

Humber

No new applications

(b) *To note:* updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

242476 Railway Cottage Stoke Prior HR6 0LQ

Proposed external insulation and render to gable end and back of house. **Approved with Conditions**

250389 The Dingle Stoke Prior Lane HR6 0NB

Application for variation of condition 2 of permission P241774/FH to allow minor alterations to the design to raise the height of the roof. **Approved**

241366 Land at Lamb Inn, Stoke Prior, HR6 0NB

Proposed change of use of the Lamb Inn Public House to use as a single dwelling house and retention of external staircase, first floor terrace and railings. **Refused**

233094 Priory Farm Stoke Prior HR6 0ND.

The construction and retention of a rural worker's dwelling, seminar room and a range of eight stables with ancillary tack and hay store. **Approved with Conditions**

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm

Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective). **Undecided.**

204437 Plot 1 Land at Old Hall Stoke Prior HR6 0LH

Proposed construction of a new self-build custom home and garage

Undecided – on hold due to phosphates

Humber.

241806 Oak Tree View Risbury HR6 0NQ

Proposed Conversion of Building to a self-build dwelling House

Undecided

212600 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG

Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).

Undecided – on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG

Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648.

Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.

211802 Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687. **Undecided**

193259 New House Farm Risbury HR6 0NQ

Outline planning for proposed housing development on land at New House Farm. Pending S106 agreement.

Undecided

44/25 General Financial Matters

To consider: Purchase of a replacement computer in preparation for Windows 11

Windows 10 goes out of support in October 2025. In many cases a new machine will be required for current users due to Windows 11 supporting a limited list of hardware. Both Pencombe & HFSP require new machines.

It is worth considering buying locally to obtain local support if required. The following suppliers are in Hereford, have support capability and are easily accessible if necessary.

The following machines are pre-loaded with W11

Machine	Price ex VAT	Supplier	Notes
HP 255 G9	£375	CSS Computers Hereford	Current supplier to HFSP. Provides expert support when required
ACER Aspire 3	£340	Currys, Hereford	Mainstream supplier with enough expertise to solve common problems
HP 250 G9	£575	John Finch Computers, Hereford	Support capability but rather expensive.

Council already subscribes to Microsoft 365 which can be transferred to a new machine.

Security/Anti-virus, software is prudent Norton, McAfee, AVG etc £21.00+VAT/year

In total about £400+VAT is required for a new machine and software suite. Council granted the Clerk authority to order a machine and software within the £400+VAT limit from whichever supplier he believes will provide the best value package including support capability.

Note: the supplier chosen is CSS Computers of Hereford who have supported the Council in previous years.

To consider: opening an interest bearing deposit account for reserves/surplus funds

Following recommendation from the RFO Council agreed to open a 90 day notice deposit account with the Hinckley & Rugby Building Society. The account bears 3.4% interest and the RFO had completed all the account opening paperwork.

It was agreed that the signatories on the account would be –

The RFO

Cllr. Fowler-Wright

Cllr. Yair

Note: that account is now open and contains £5001.

To consider: Salary award to the Clerk for 2023-24

The Clerk provided details of the annual salary award for 2024-25 which was effective from 1 April 2024. This award for the Clerk is an increase of £0.62/hour or about £283/year. Council agreed that the award should be paid to the Clerk and the Chairman signed the authorisation to Autela.

To approve: the authorisation of payments

The RFO reported that the bank balance on 15 May 2025 was £15390.41

Payments made since last meeting.					
No.	Name	Ex-VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	414.21	0.00	414.21	February 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	414.21	0.00	414.21	March 2025 salary (payable 25 March 2025)
3	Barrington Print	448.00	0.00	448.00	Inv 13625 Feb 2025 Pump. 360 copies x32 pages
4	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	Inv 13741 March Pump 360 copies x36 pages.
5	Humber Parish Rooms	24.00	0.00	24.00	Room hire 19 March 2025
6	Humber Parish Rooms	24.00	0.00	24.00	Room hire 15 January 2025
7	A M Drew	584.08	116.82	700.90	Refund for Lengthsman advert Hereford Times
8	A M Drew	37.49	7.50	44.99	Refund for Office 365 software
9	HMRC	276.00	0.00	276.00	PAYE February 2025
10	HMRC	276.00	0.00	276.00	Paye March 2025
11	HALC	637.20	127.44	764.64	Subscriptions 2025-26
12	Enviroloo	166.67	33.33	200.00	Hire of toilets for Community Week
13	Autela	85.28	17.06	102.34	Payroll (4 months)
14	Bank service charges	6.00			
					Financial year end
15	Alex Davidson	300.00			Lengthsman Low Brook, Risbury
16	Alex Davidson	600.00			Lengthsman Wheelbarrow Castle
	TOTAL	4753.14	302.14	4149.28	

Income received since last meeting –			
No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Broxton	250.00	Pelli Tec advert for Parish Walks
			Financial year end
2	HCC Creditors	11348.00	Precept part 1
3	JP Ltd	400.00	TP78 Pump advert
4	Radway Bridge	210.00	Pump advert
5	Grove Golf & Bowl	400.00	Pump advert
6	Matthew Newman	17.50	Pump advert?
	TOTAL	12625.50	

Payments for Authorisation					
No.	Name	Ex VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's April 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's May 2025 salary payable 25 May 2025
3	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13951 May 25 Pump
4	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13858 April 25 Pump
5	Geosphere	30.00	6.00	36.00	Parish online mapping services
6	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/04/2025 PAYE
7	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/05/2025 PAYE
			0.00	0.00	
	TOTAL	2412.38			

Council agreed that these payments should be made.

45/25 Lengthsman & PROW

To receive: update on appointing a new Lengthsman for 2025-26

The candidate for Lengthsman – Alex Davidson - who has done the work at Low Brook and Wheelbarrow Castle has not been able to take on the role permanently. However, the Clerk has been able to engage the services of Graham Symonds who undertakes groundworks and has the necessary machinery, skills and labour force to carry out the work Council requires.

To receive: update on current Lengthsman activities including participation in 2025-26 scheme
 The Legthsman scheme is as expected being repeated for 2025-26 and the funding is already known at £2376 for the annual maintenance plan and £118 matched funding for the Nominated Task. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Lengthsman contract for 2025-26.

It
To consider: any other works required within the Group Parishes

Cllr. Bemand mentioned the idea of a drain from the region of the Heath across to the Humber Brook. The idea had been considered previously but was too expensive due to the required depth of the trench. However, if the drain was dug from a position further north of the Heath it would catch water coming down the C1110 and provide effective drainage to that area of the highway and surrounding properties.

Cllr. Bemand also thought that a worthwhile project would be drainage on the C1110 from Hollywall to the Mill Pitch. Such a project could be tied in with restoration of the roadside ditch running down the west side of the C1110 towards Hollywall.

46/25 Flood Group

To receive: any update on flood prevention/mitigation initiatives

Cllr. Yair is representing the Council at the regular flood group meetings organised by Herefordshire Council. It was agreed that the Council would form a local flood group comprising Parish Councillors and other residents. Cllr. Yair would lead the group and recruit other group members Cllr. Yair also provided the following briefing from a recent meeting-

Community Flood Equipment

I have submitted an EOI to Herefordshire Council for Community Flood Equipment. Options available include:

- Sandbags
- HydroSnakes
- Safe storage
- Other simple equipment e.g. temporary portable flood barriers, shovels, torches, high visibility PPE, resilience stores, etc

Waiting for response to the EOI.

Community Flood Signage Scheme

The Community Flood Signage Scheme (CFSS) allows trained volunteers to close roads during times of flooding. The scheme promotes road safety but also stops vehicles creating bow waves that can cause further damage to property. The scheme is administered by Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) on behalf of Herefordshire Council.

(BBLP will continue to attend highway flooding incidents and close roads, as necessary. The CFSS supplements this work and allow members of the community to close roads during times of flooding possibly sooner than BBLP may be able to attend otherwise).

Where **MAY BE** eligible for a CFSS?

- Locations where roads are frequently affected by severe flooding. For example:
 - Roads become impassible.
 - Driving through the flood water creates bow waves which can cause damage to nearby properties.
 - There is a clear risk that drivers could become stranded.
- Only locations where there are a sufficient number of willing volunteers will be eligible to ensure the longevity of the scheme.

Where **IS NOT** suitable for a CFSS?

- Unlit A-roads with a 60mph speed limit.
- Locations:
 - with limited numbers of volunteers.
 - that are not frequently or severely affected by flooding.
 - with no viable turning points for vehicles near to the proposed closure point/s.

Community flood signage scheme requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Initial information required to consider the eligibility of a CFSS:

• A map indicating where 'road closed' signs are proposed, such as roads that experience flooding in your local area.	✓
• Photographic evidence of the road(s) during a period of flooding to demonstrate flood extent.	✓
• The speed limit on the road(s).	✓
• A named contact, including full name, phone number and email address, role in community (for example Ward Member, parish councillor, flood group representative, village hall volunteer).	

• The number of volunteers willing to participate in the scheme.	
• Where you intend to store the equipment (such as road signs, personal safety equipment).	
• Confirmation that all volunteers are prepared to undertake in-person training	

Potential Sites to consider in Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior:

- 1) Ford Bridge
- 2) Wheelbarrow Castle
- 3) Bowley Lane / Risbury Mill
- 4) Bowley Lane / The Heath
- 5) (Humber Close)
- 6) (A44 Tick Bridge)
- 7) Any others?

The Chairman commented that these initiatives would tie in well with the Community Resilience Plan. He invited other Councillors to join the Flood Group if they wished.

Cllr. Yair had visited the “Flood Mary roadshow” (an initiative by Ms Mary Long-Dhonau OBE) where useful advice was distributed. The emphasis of the roadshow was to help individual householders take simple steps to make their properties more resilient. Such advice is highly complementary to the more broadbrush projects being considered by Council. An article in the Pump incorporating Ms Long-Donau’s advice would be published as winter approaches.

47/25 Current projects

To receive: any updates on current projects

Traffic & Road Safety Cllrs. Grace & Marston

Cllr. Grace had received no support from Herefordshire for the campaign to implement a 40mph speed limit along the full length of Bowley lane. Cllr. Bemand was surprised that the data showed there was so little speeding. There was concern about where the speed checks had been carried out and the Chairman had experimented at one of the check sites. He found it very unsettling to achieve even 35mph due to the road bends/contours and was not surprised that recorded speeds were quite low. On other nearby stretches he commented that exceeding the national speed limit would be quite easy (though he had not actually done this), but there seemed to be no data from such areas. Cllr. Thomas pointed out that even driving within the speed limit could often be dangerous especially in difficult conditions including the poor visibility clothing often worn by pedestrians and cyclists. These problems are greatly exacerbated when the A49/A417 are closed. Cllr. Grace would challenge Herefordshire on the placing of the speed recording sites but she was not confident that a positive result would be achieved. She also mentioned that she had incurred considerable personal expense by removing a hedge near her property. This was the only initiative Herefordshire and West Mercia Police had suggested - notably neither of them was able to contribute any actions their organisations could take. To finish this work she has asked Simon Hobbs if Herefordshire would be prepared to cover the cost of a traffic regulation order so that the remaining hedge could be removed with a mechanical digger. She awaits a response.

Cllr. Grace felt that the only feasible approach would be average speed cameras on the Steens Bridge area. (Note: However, costs of average speed camera systems is high though falling. Currently a camera system is estimated at £85k but information seems very scarce). Cllr. Fullwood mentioned that Kinnersley Parish had used a smiley face SID but it appears that the class of road of the A44 does not allow such devices.

Cllr. Thomas mentioned that he believed speed cameras are self-funding. This assertion is true for “spot” cameras, but not for average speed cameras which have a much higher level of compliance.

Environment Cllrs. Yair & Hinton

There was no update on the environment project.

To consider: new projects for 2025-26

Cllr. Thomas mentioned Community Funded Policing which was growing in scale in the UK. (Note: The PCC supports Community Funded Policing which is also described as Neighbourhood Policing. Government has allocated £200m for 13,000 additional police officers. More information including lead roles is available at <https://www.apccs.police.uk/our-work/community-policing/>)

The Chairman asked all Members to consider any possible new projects and bring ideas to the next meeting.

48/25 Matters for information and future business

To note: any other matters for information or future decision.

Mr Matt Lewis, Stoke Prior headteacher, will be invited to the next meeting.

The Forward Plan requires that the following annual business is discussed-

July 2025 Policies & Procedures (1)

Standing Orders, Non GDPR Policies, Committees & Membership

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 16th July 2025 in Stoke Prior Village Hall

Signed.....Chair

Date.....

Agenda item 56/25 Planning Committee and planning applications update

(c) To consider for comment new applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council.

Ford & Stoke Prior

Two new applications to check if prior approval is required – 251565 Ford farm, HR6 0LE and 251435 Luce farm HR6 0RR. The determinations have already been made and PA is NOT required.

Humber

251590 New Barn, Gt. Marston Farm, Risbury, HR6 0NJ Application for prior approval to erect roof over manure heap.
Prior approval refused, planning application required.

251884 Land at Buckland farm, Docklow, HR6 0RU Conversion of redundant rural farm buildings to 8 dwellings. Demolition of existing farm buildings and erection of new farm buildings.

(d) To note: updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective). **Undecided.**

This application is due to be determined by Herefordshire Planning and Regulatory Committee. However, it is not on the latest posted agenda for the meeting of 4 July 2025. The Chairman has written to the Ward Cllr. expressing his concerns regarding the delay in determining a retrospective application. The Planning Officer, Rebecca Jenman provided Cllr. Baker with an update on the case. This update is summarised as-

The retrospective planning application 223610 is currently under review, with a request for committee determination. This determination is likely to be conditional upon approval by the planning officer. An extension has been proposed until the end of September for the submission of additional documents, including a heritage statement and an aerial emission assessment. The applicant is preparing these documents to address outstanding issues. However, there is no guarantee that these submissions will resolve the technical concerns. Any required mitigation measures must be implemented upfront rather than through planning conditions

200705/251098 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm Stoke Prior. Application to lift conditions 3 & 4 of 200705
Split decision C3 not upheld, C4 discharged

204437 Plot 1 Land at Old Hall Stoke Prior HR6 0LH Proposed construction of a new self-build custom home and garage
Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

Humber.

241806 Oak Tree View Risbury HR6 0NQ Proposed Conversion of Building to a self-build dwelling House
Undecided

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG
Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).
Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG
Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648. **Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.**

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire
Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687. **Undecided**

193259 New House Farm Risbury HR6 0NQ Outline planning for proposed housing development on land at New House Farm.
Undecided

Agenda item 57/25 General Financial Matters

Report from the RFO.

Bank balances on 11 July 2025 is-

Unity Bank current account £8,749.63

H&R 90 day account £5,001.00

Q1 (April – June 2025) Bank Reconciliation

HFSP CASHBOOK 2025-26								
Date	Details	Receipt	Payment	Classification	Add to Asset Register	VAT	VAT Number	Running Balance
01/04/2025	Balance brought forward	3920.91						3920.91
07/04/2025	Alex Davidson AD0132		300.00	Lengthsman				3620.91
07/04/2025	Alex Davidson AD0131		600.00	Lengthsman				3020.91
17/04/2025	Herefordshire Council precept pt. 1	11348.00		Precept				14368.91
17/04/2025	J P Ltd	400.00		Adverts				14768.91
22/04/2025	Radway Bridge	210.00		Adverts				14978.91
30/04/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges				14972.91
13/05/2025	Golf Grove & Bowl	400.00		Adverts				15372.91
14/05/2025	Matthew Newman	17.50		Adverts				15390.41
20/05/2025	Herefordshire Council Refund	955.00		Grants				16345.41
27/05/2025	A M Drew Clerk April 25 salary		552.21	Clerk				15793.20
27/05/2025	HMRC PAYE April 25		178.98	Clerk				15614.22
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		37.80	Parish Pump				15576.42
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		25.40	Parish Pump				15551.02
27/05/2025	A M Drew Clerk May 25 salary		552.21	Clerk				14998.81
27/05/2025	Barrington Print INV-13951 May 25 Pump		460.00	Parish Pump				14538.81
27/05/2025	Geosphere mapping		36.00	Administration		20.00%	296312096	14502.81
27/05/2025	Barrington Print INV-13858 April 25 Pump		460.00	Parish Pump				14042.81
27/05/2025	Philip Brown		27.20	Parish Pump				14015.61
27/05/2025	HMRC PAYE May 25		178.98	Clerk		0.00%		13836.63
31/05/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges		0.00%		13830.63
03/06/2025	Zurich Insurance 2025-26		494.50	Insurance, audit,				13336.13
03/06/2025	Lion Court Podiatry TP 82	120.00		Adverts				13456.13
05/06/2025	Thomas Humber W/land of Remem.	120.00		Adverts				13576.13
16/06/2025	Services for Indep. TP83	210.00		Adverts				13786.13
20/06/2025	H&R Building Society		1.00	Out-Transfer				13785.13
23/06/2025	Matthew Newman	17.50		Adverts				13802.63
25/06/2025	H&R Building Society		5000.00	Out-Transfer				8802.63
30/06/2025	Information Commissioner		47.00	Insurance, audit,				8755.63
30/06/2025	Service charge		6.00	Bank Charges				8749.63
Apr-Jun	Sub-totals for period (Horiz.)	13798.00	8969.28					
	Sub -totals for period (Vert)	13798.00	8969.28					
	Balance check	8749.63	OK					
	Reconciliation	OK	OK					
	Totals for financial year to date	13798.00	8969.28					

In the Council cash book for quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June 2025) the opening balance is £3920.91. During this first quarter of the year Council received £13,798.00 and paid £8969.28. The balance shown in the cash book (£3920.91+£13798.00-£8969.28=£8749.63) is £8749.63.

The bank statements showing 31 March 2025 and 30 June 2025 follow which confirm both the opening and closing balance for the quarter.

Note that the total balance at the end of the quarter is £8749.63+£5001.00 = £13749.63. The £5001 is the balance in the H&R 90 day deposit account. A letter from the H&R Building Society dated 26th June is attached to confirm this balance.

Your Account Statement



For Businesses. For Communities. For Good.

1034638010 | 01375

Mr Allan Drew
Humber Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
HR7 4RL

Unity Trust Bank plc
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG



Date: 30/04/2025

Account Name: Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Swift Code (BIC): NWBKGB2L

IBAN Number: GB93NWBK60023571418024

Sort Code: 608301

Account Number: 20430401

Your arranged overdraft limit is £0.00

Go Paperless! Receive your statements online and we'll notify you by SMS or email when they're available to view. Simply log into Your Online Banking and update your statement preferences or give us a call on 0345 140 1000



For eligible organisations, your deposits held with Unity Trust Bank are protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). For more information about eligibility and compensation provided by the FSCS, please visit: [FSCS.org.uk](https://www.fscs.org.uk) or refer to our FSCS Information Sheet and Exclusions List at [unity.co.uk/fscs](https://www.unity.co.uk/fscs)

Contact Us

- Call us: **0345 140 1000**
- Email us: us@unity.co.uk
- Visit us: [unity.co.uk](https://www.unity.co.uk)

1034638010 | 01375 | 00001 | 00004 |

Your Current T1 account transactions:

Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
31/03/2025		Balance brought forward	£0.00	£0.00	£3,920.91
07/04/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Alex Davidson	£300.00	£0.00	£3,620.91
07/04/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Alex Davidson	£600.00	£0.00	£3,020.91
17/04/2025	Credit	HCC CREDITORS	£0.00	£11,348.00	£14,368.91

Page number 1 of 3

Statement number 071

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For Communities.
For Good.**

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Your Account Statement



For Businesses. For Communities. For Good.

Unity Trust Bank plc
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG

1042515011 | 01362

Mr Allan Drew
Humber Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
HR7 4RL

Date: 30/06/2025

Account Name: Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Swift Code (BIC): NWBKGB2L

IBAN Number: GB93NWBK60023571418024

Sort Code: 608301

Account Number: 20430401

Your arranged overdraft limit is £0.00

Go Paperless! Receive your statements online and we'll notify you by SMS or email when they're available to view. Simply log into Your Online Banking and update your statement preferences or give us a call on 0345 140 1000



For eligible organisations, your deposits held with Unity Trust Bank are protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). For more information about eligibility and compensation provided by the FSCS, please visit: [FSCS.org.uk](https://www.fscs.org.uk) or refer to our FSCS Information Sheet and Exclusions List at [unity.co.uk/fscs](https://www.unity.co.uk/fscs)

Contact Us

- Call us: **0345 140 1000**
- Email us: us@unity.co.uk
- Visit us: [unity.co.uk](https://www.unity.co.uk)

Your Current T1 account transactions:

Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
31/05/2025		Balance brought forward	£0.00	£0.00	£13,830.63
03/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Zurich Insurance	£494.50	£0.00	£13,336.13
03/06/2025	Credit	LION COURT PODIATRY AND ASSOCIATES	£0.00	£120.00	£13,456.13
05/06/2025	Credit	THOMAS H W OF R	£0.00	£120.00	£13,576.13

Page number 1 of 3

Statement number 073

**For Businesses.
For Communities.
For Good.**

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1042515011 | 01362 | 00001 | 00004 |

Your Current T1 account transactions:					
Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
16/06/2025	Transfer	SERVICES FOR INDEP	£0.00	£210.00	£13,786.13
20/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£1.00	£0.00	£13,785.13
23/06/2025	Credit	Matthew Newman	£0.00	£17.50	£13,802.63
25/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£5,000.00	£0.00	£8,802.63
30/06/2025	Direct Debit	Direct Debit (ICO)	£47.00	£0.00	£8,755.63
30/06/2025	Fee	Service Charge	£6.00	£0.00	£8,749.63

Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
16/06/2025	Transfer	SERVICES FOR INDEP	£0.00	£210.00	£13,786.13
20/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£1.00	£0.00	£13,785.13
23/06/2025	Credit	Matthew Newman	£0.00	£17.50	£13,802.63
25/06/2025	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: HR Savings	£5,000.00	£0.00	£8,802.63
30/06/2025	Direct Debit	Direct Debit (ICO)	£47.00	£0.00	£8,755.63
30/06/2025	Fee	Service Charge	£6.00	£0.00	£8,749.63



**For Businesses.
For Communities.
For Good.**

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H&R Building Society account balance advice

Hinckley & Rugby
Building Society

Upper Bond Street
Hinckley
LE10 1NZ
Telephone: 0800 434 6343
Website: hrbs.co.uk

Mr A Drew, Mr H Fowler-Wright & Mr T Yair
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
Herefordshire
HR7 4RL

26th June 2025

Dear Mr Drew, Mr Fowler-Wright & Mr Yair

Your new Local Council 90 Day Notice Deposit Account

Thank you for opening a new account with the Society. Your new account details and opening balance are:

Open Date	-	3rd June 2025
Account Balance	-	£5,001.00
Account Number	-	17011058123

To pay money into your account online or set up a regular Standing Order, use these details:

Account type: Business account

Account name: The account name of your organisation

Sort Code: 40-05-30

Account Number: 74575938

Reference or roll number: Your 11-digit Hinckley & Rugby account number, shown above.

Without this, we will not be able to allocate the money to your account, and it will be returned to sender.

Please note that withdrawals can only be made by electronic funds transfer and can only be withdrawn to the council's nominated bank account.

Withdrawals are subject to a 90-day notice period and must be made within 14 days of the notice period becoming effective. Instant withdrawals (outside of the notice period) are not permitted under the term and conditions of this account. The total amount on notice of withdrawal at any time must not be more than the balance of the account.

You can give notice of a withdrawal at any of our branches or agencies, by calling our Customer Service Team on 0800 434 6343, or by posting a signed letter to the branch or to our head office. You can also give notice of a withdrawal of up to £25,000 on our H&R Online service (if you are registered).

When the notice becomes effective, withdrawals of up to £250,000 will be processed on the first business day of the 14-day withdrawal window, and credited to your nominated bank account the same business day. No charge will be made for this service.

Withdrawals over £250,000 are sent by telegraphic transfer (CHAPs). There is a charge for this service; please refer to the current tariff of charges in the Interest Rates for Savers leaflet or on the Society's website.

H&R Online

Our H&R Online service offers many useful features. For withdrawal requests, any one signatory can make the request to transfer funds to your nominated bank account. To register for H&R Online, please visit our website hrbs.co.uk and click the **H&R Online** button to begin your registration process.

Other information

The following documents have been shared with you before: Savings Terms and Conditions, Deposit Guarantee Scheme, Customer Privacy Notice, and the declaration you signed for your new account. You can also view these documents at hrbs.co.uk/important-savings-information or by visiting your local branch.

If you need any help, or if you would like more information about our range of accounts, please contact us on **01455 250959** or hinckleybranch@hrbs.co.uk or visit your local branch.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Tebbutt
Senior Customer Assistant
Hinckley Branch

Quarter 1 Budget Monitor

BUDEGET MONITOR			2025-26				
		OUTTURN 2024-25	BUDGET	YEAR TO DATE	FORECAST OUTTURN	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET	
1	INCOME	Precept	15322.00	22696.00	11348.00	22696.00	0.00
2		Pump Advertising	2487.00	2750.00	1495.00	2750.00	0.00
3		Pump Postage	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00
4		Grants	6317.63	10000.00	955.00	13300.00	3300.00
5		Other Income	3104.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6		VAT Reclaim	2097.15	1967.00	0.00	1967.00	0.00
7		CW Fundraising	695.38	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
8		Other Projects	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9		TOTAL INCOME	30313.16	37953.00	13798.00	41253.00	3300.00
EXPENDITURE							
10	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	Clerk	4969.68	8836.00	1462.38	8536.00	300.00
11		Administration	1025.14	500.00	48.00	500.00	0.00
12		Insurance, audit, professional	1294.64	1600.00	541.50	541.50	1058.50
13		Website & IT	553.49	900.00	0.00	900.00	0.00
14		Hire of Halls	210.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00
15		Training and development	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
16		Equipment	654.93	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
17		Maintenance	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
18		HMRC	3557.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19		Other	1738.87	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	14004.48	12286.00	2051.88	10677.50	1608.50	
PROJECTS							
21	PROJECT EXPENDITURE	War Memorial	60.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
22		Parish Pump	5350.00	5100.00	1010.40	5100.00	0.00
23		Lengthsman	355.00	14752.00	900.00	14752.00	0.00
24		Community Week	496.67	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00
25		Environment Project	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
26		Road Safety	4958.98	5000.00	0.00	5000.00	0.00
27		Welcome pack		0.00		0.00	0.00
28		Trails Booklet	821.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
29		Project B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30		Project C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
31					0.00		
32	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	12041.65	25352.00	1910.40	25352.00	0.00	
33	Reclaimable VAT on the above	1966.97	3000	6.00	3000.00	0.00	
				0.00			
34	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	28013.10	40638.00	3968.28	39029.50	1608.50	
35	SURPLUS	4267.03	315.00	9829.72	5223.50	4908.50	

Notes for budget monitor Q1 2024-25

NOTES FOR Q1 BUDGET MONITOR 2024-25	
1	As agreed at meeting 15 January 2025. Increase to create drainage reserve of £10,000
2	
3	Nominal amount
4	Lengthsman scheme updated to include £2376 base grant & £1188 match funded Nominated Task. Applications for drainage grant of £5000 and PROW grant of £5000 will be made.
5	
6	
7	Estimate only
8	
9	
10	Based on Clerk's gross salary for 2025-26 plus arrears ~£300 for 2024-25)
11	Budget in line with normal spend. (Last year £600 for L/man advert)
12	Budget increased by £300 due to sharp and unexpected rise in insurance premium
13	New PC + some soft ware in readiness for W11.
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	Now included with Clerk line 10
19	
20	
21	Project closed
22	Price to be held at £460/issue for 11 issues + some misc. items (stamps etc.)
23	AMP £2376; Nom Task £2376 (incl. Parish match funding); Drainage £5000: PROW £5000
24	Estimate similar to 2024-25
25	No spend last year. Council to agree way forward on this project.
26	Budget set at £5000 as for last year.
27	Project closed
28	Project closed
29	
30	
31	
32	
33	VAT estimate based on increased Lengthsman works
34	
35	Surplus is calculated on ex-VAT costs. Note that funds to be used to create £10,000 drainage reserve

Currently the budget monitor shows no need for any corrections – there is no reason at this stage to forecast any over or under spends.

Payments for Authorisation

Payments made since last meeting.					
No.	Name	Ex-VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's April 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	Clerk's May 2025 salary payable 25 May 2025
3	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13951 May 25 Pump
4	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-13858 April 25 Pump
5	Geosphere	30.00	6.00	36.00	Parish online mapping services
6	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/04/2025 PAYE
7	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	01/05/2025 PAYE
	TOTAL	2412.38	6.00	2583.38	

Income received since last meeting –			
No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Herefordshire Council	955.00	Refund for drainage projects 2024-25
2	Lion Court Podiatry	120.00	Pump Advert
3	Thomas Humber W/land	120.00	Pump Advert
4	Services for Indep.	210.00	Pump Advert
5	Matthew Newman	17.50	Pump Advert
	TOTAL	1422.50	

Payments for Authorisation					
No.	Name	Ex VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	June 2025 salary
2	A M Drew	552.21	0.00	552.21	July 2025 salary, due 25th July
3	Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	INV-14066 June 2025 Pump
4	Barrington Print	448.00	0.00	448.00	INV-14209 July 2025 Pump
6	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	PAYE June 2025
7	HMRC PAYE	178.98	0.00	178.98	PAYE July 2025
6	SLCC	183.00	0.00	183.00	Annual subscription
	TOTAL	2553.38	0.00	2553.38	

Council is invited to authorise payments of £2553.38

Agenda item 58/25 Annual Business from Forward Plan 2025-26

The business carried over from the May meeting and scheduled for this meeting is-

- adoption of new model Standing Orders as recommended by HALC Internal Audit
- updates to all Council (non-GDPR) policies.
- committees & membership

Update to Standing Orders

At the 2024-25 Internal Audit HALC stated that Council's Standing Orders were now quite old (though they have been reviewed every year and updates made). It was recommended that Council adopts the model Standing Orders published by NALC, which was something that had been intended anyway.

The set of Model Standing Orders are at appendix 1. At various points these orders require Council to make choices about the specific wording. The Clerk has extracted all these choices, summarised them in a table and recommended which wording Council could adopt. This Summary of Choices follows the Standing Orders in appendix 1. Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Standing Orders and the choices and be prepared to agree the options they wish to see.

Update to non-GDPR policies

Council has the following policies which are non-GDPR.

Policy	General Description	Last Review	Last Update	Recommendation
Grievance Procedure	For employees with a grievance against the Council as an employer	2022	N/A	New policy drafted for consideration
Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	Management of employee performance and misconduct	2022	N/A	New updated policy drafted for consideration
HFSP Equalities policy May 2025	To comply with Council obligations under the Equalities Act 2010	2025	2022	No changes proposed
HFSP Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee meetings May 2025	To comply with legislation promoting openness and transparency in Council business	2025	N/A	No changes proposed
HFSP Complaints Procedure Jan2013 amended May 2025	Complaints from residents to Council regarding Council administration, procedures or against Council employees.,	2025	2025 Contact details updated	No changes proposed
HFSP Publication Scheme Schedule Classes of Information as amended May 2025	The information available from Council concerning all aspects of its activities	2025	2025	Details updated particularly around financial information
HFSP Safeguarding Statement	To ensure all facilities and activities offered by Council limit risk to children, young people and adults at risks.	2025	2023	All links and references in the statement are still valid. No changes required.

All these policies have been reviewed and in the case of the Grievance Procedure and the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure recent updates to employment law meant that new policies/procedures would be the most effective route to improvement. A draft Grievance Procedure is shown at appendix 2 and a draft Disciplinary Policy & Procedure at appendix 3. Templates from NALC and other Council sources have been used to develop these draft policies.

Council is invited to consider these draft policies, amend if required and then adopt them as Council policies.

Council Committees

- a) Planning Committee
Current members of the committee are Chairman & vice-Chairman (ex-officio), Cllrs. Bemand, Marston, Fullwood and Grace.
- (b) Community Week Committee
Current Members - the Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio, Margaret Brown (Secretary and Treasurer) and any other member of the community wishing to attend. However, Margaret Brown has said she will retire from the Community Week committee.
- (c) Finance Committee
Current Members - the RFO, Cllr Tim Yair and Cllr. Chris Marston.

Membership of other bodies and representatives 2025-26

Current subscriptions to other bodies are-
HALC ~£700/year
CPRE £36/year
Parish Online £36/year
Council should decide if these subscriptions should continue

To appoint Councillors to the following positions-

Risbury Village Hall Committee representative:	currently Cllr. Harris
Stoke Prior Village Hall Committee representative:	currently Cllr. Fulwood
Police Liaison Officer:	currently Cllr. Fowler-Wrght.
Safeguarding Officer:	currently Cllr. Yair
Humber Close Liaison Officer	currently Cllr. Grace

Public Rights of Way Officers: Iain Cholerton (bridleways), Philip Brown (Humber) and Cllr. Sneyd (Stoke Prior)

Agenda item 59/25 Lengthsman & PROW

With the new Lengthsman in place and the updated reports from the Parish Paths' Officers in place a work program is being developed partly to improve the public realm and partly to support grant applications. The first task has been to create a comprehensive program for Public Rights of Way and what follows is a proposed list of works which the Lengthsman will be asked to price. This pricing will form the basis of a grant application for a Parish wide improvement to PROWs. The same approach is being used for the drainage grant.

A summary of the PROW works follows. There is a comprehensive series of photographs to help identify the problems and for each detailed works description there is an accompanying specification/pricing sheet with the following headings-

Materials Required	Estimated Materials Cost	Estimated Labour Costs	Total Estimated Cost	Grant Applied for	Contractor WO ref.	WO Date	Estimated Start Date	Estimated Completion date
--------------------	--------------------------	------------------------	----------------------	-------------------	--------------------	---------	----------------------	---------------------------

PROW WORKS PROGRAM 2025-26

Case No.	PROW reference	Location start	Location finish	Details of Works	Photograph number
	SP28	contemplate.convey.deed	padlock.strutted.dots	Request Lengthsman clear undergrowth in summer months from the road at Witsetts to SP 28.1	
	HU10	loitering.giggle.afterglow		Replace a rotten gatepost at HU10.2	
	PG11.2	yachting.butternut.birds		Contact the landowners of Sheepcote to request they make good the approach to gate PG 11.2 which is flooded and muddy	
	SP17	booms.loops.spoons		Determine if encroachment onto SP 17 at Trap Cottage (House) is legal and take appropriate action if it is not.	
	SP2	diplomats.rested.atom	sour.upward.bangle	from the access road on C1112 at The Woodhouse, the FP is well signed, and stiles and gates are accessible. Nevertheless, upon reaching, traversing, and exiting the woodland area, the path becomes impassable, and the route's signage is missing.	1 and 2
			??	There is a broken post supporting the gate out of the walkthrough	3
	SP4		??	Once in the open fields, the footpath cannot be followed easily as signage stops, and there is a padlocked gate preventing further access	4
			??	As the footpath enters farmland, the stile and bridge both have significant undergrowth surrounding them that needs clearing. The bridge immediately after the stile is ill defined and potentially hazardous. A much-needed handrail is present, which aids navigation. Action is required to clear the undergrowth and ensure the bridge and handrail are adequate and low risk to footpath users	5 and 6
	SP31		??	From this point, signage is minimal, and there is no clearly defined route across the fields or around the woodland until just before crossing onto the golf club land, where there were two signs in the hedgerow. This section of the footpath was planted at the time of inspection.	7 and 8
				On accessing the golf club land, over this stile, all signage ceased, and there was no clear route. This is where the footpath joins the FD4 path, which leads down to the end at Ford Farm on the C1113. There is a notice stating the footpath has changed route and that way markers are to be followed. However, no way markers were evident.	
		professed.deliver.political	offer.looms.pitch	Action is required to improve the signage along the route, particularly across the field and around the edge of the woodland, to the point where it meets FD4. A clear path needs to be created across the field to ensure walkers are aware of the route to follow.	9
	FD4	offer.looms.pitch	comical.ratty.farmland	Upon accessing the golf course, where FD4 begins, a notice is displayed stating that the footpath has changed route and that way markers are to be followed. However, no way markers were evident. Action is required to improve signage across the golf course.	
	HU3	canine.waters.shuttled		At stile/gate 1 at the southern end, this stile is in need of repair and there is no signage here.	
		grunt.beads.eradicate		Bridge (2) is still in need of repair, as noted in 2023 and 2024 and is considered too dangerous to use.	10
		bond.highlighted.enacted		Stiles 4 and 5 south-west of Humber Close are completely overgrown and require strimming.	11
		heave.hubcaps.intervene		Where the path reaches Humber Close, the dangerous state of the path and the completely broken stile (6) has still not been addressed, despite this having been identified and reported in 2021.	12
	HU5	uppermost Depending.strapping		The stile (2) leading to steps into the field is very overgrown and still in need of minor repairs.	13
	HU6	worm.sprouting.talent		Stile (1) off HU5 is still badly broken and requires repairs or replacement.	14
		oppose.remaining.gestures		Stile (6) has broken completely, and the old metal gate alongside can only be opened with some difficulty.	15
	PG12	doghouse.relocated.rezoning	cuddling.limitless.locked	As noted since 2021 the route into and through the woodland between Stile (4) and Stile (5) is undefined and hazardous and requires clearance of undergrowth and some saplings, and ideally some waymarker posts.	
		cuddling.limitless.locked	machine.with.pounces	The official route between Stile 5 and Gate 7 into the field (through woodland) is completely impassable and obstructed by wire fencing.	16 and 17



**HUMBER,
FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP
PARISH COUNCIL**

STANDING ORDERS

JULY 2025

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. NALC standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The standing orders do not include financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of a local council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of a council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. financial regulations are available to councils in membership of NALC.

DRAFTING NOTES

standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning. Standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements so they may be adopted as drafted or amended to suit a council's needs. It is NALC's view that all model standing orders will generally be suitable for councils.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights. standing orders use gender-neutral language (e.g. "Chair").

A model standing order that includes brackets like this '()' requires information to be inserted by a council. A model standing order that includes brackets like this '[]' and the term 'OR' provides alternative options for a council to choose from when determining standing orders.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he

last spoke;

- iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed () minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings	●
Committee meetings	●
Sub-committee meetings	●

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice OR [The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting].**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed () minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than () minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i **[A person shall stand when requesting to speak and when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)] OR [A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.**
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of

the meeting.

k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

● l **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

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

● n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

● o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**

● p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

● q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**

● r **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

● s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**

t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

i. the time and place of the meeting;

ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;

iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with

voting rights;

- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

- u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.**

- v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of () hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**

- c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:

- i. shall determine their terms of reference;

- ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;

- iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;

- iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of

members of such a committee;

- v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer () days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
- vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
- viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a**

casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
 - vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
 - vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
 - x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
 - xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
 - xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
 - xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
 - xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
 - xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
 - xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;

- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not call an extraordinary meeting within () days of having been requested to do so by () members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any () members of the committee [or the sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or a sub-committee].

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least () councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least () clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least () clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;

- viii. to require a written report;
- ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

- Full Council meetings ●
- Committee meetings ●
- Sub-committee meetings ●

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the

- agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
 - c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
 - d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but this view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
 - e **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
 - f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the Council’s code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e **A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made [by the Proper Officer] OR [by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final.**
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:

- i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
- ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
- iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
- iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g *Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].*

- h** A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:
 - i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
 - ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
 - iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a** Upon notification by the Principal Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a** The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b** The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See *standing order 3(b)* for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and *standing order 3(c)* for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least () days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also *standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. **refer a planning application received by the Council to the [Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council] OR [Chair or in their absence Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the () Committee] within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of [the Council] OR [() committee];**
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also *standing order 23*).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the

Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported andwhich includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;

- iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
- v. whether contracts with an estimated value below [60,000] due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- d. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a *A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of [Council] OR [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] is subject to standing order 11.*
- b *Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or, if he is not available, the vice-chair (if there is one) of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] at its next meeting.*

- c *The chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of [the member of staff's job title]. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee].*
- d *Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or in their absence, the vice-chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee].*
- e *Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by [the member of staff's job title] relates to the chair or vice-chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee], this shall be communicated to another member of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee], which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee].*
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b. ***[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000]* The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

OR

***[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeds £200,000]* The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **[Subject to standing order 23(a), the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.]**

The above is applicable to a Council with a common seal.

OR

[Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.]

The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.

24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a *An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.*
- b *Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.*

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b *A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least () councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.*
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

STANDING ORDER ITEMS REQUIRING COUNCIL CHOICE/AGREEMENT

The relevant SO, or part of, is highlighted in yellow

SO Ref.	Page no.	Text	Clerk's Recommendation	Council Determination
1t	7	Speaking time (Councillor)	5 minutes suggested	
3c	8	The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice OR [The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting].	Do not use this SO. Instead all meetings should be covered by SO 3b- The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.	
3f	9	Speaking time for public participation	15 minutes suggested	
3g	9	Speaking time for member of public	3 minutes is the norm	
3i	9	[A person shall stand when requesting to speak and when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)] OR [A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort)]. The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking	No-one need stand unless specifically asked by the Chair	
3x	11	Max. length of meeting	2 hours?	
4v	11	Days' notice for substitute members	3 days	
6d	14	Days to call a meeting No. of members req'd	7 days 2 members	

SO Ref.	Page no.	Text	Clerk's Recommendation	Council Determination
7a	14	Cllrs. to discuss reversing a motion	4 Cllrs suggested	
9b&d	15	Days' notice of a motion	3 days suggested	
12d	17	Action when minutes not agreed by Chair	Suggest this SO is not adopted	
13e	18	A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made [by the Proper Officer] OR [by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required] and that decision is final.	Dispensations should be granted by the meeting, not the Clerk. This is a more transparent process and would be done in the presence of the public	
13g	19	Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered [by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required] OR [at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required].	Dispensations should be considered by the Council. Such a requirement is contained in HFSP agendas	
15xv	21	refer a planning application received by the Council to the [Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council] OR [Chair or in their absence Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the () Committee] within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of [the Council] OR [() committee];	refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Council within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting, or a meeting of the Planning Committee, if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.	

SO Ref.	Page no.	Text	Clerk's Recommendation	Council Determination
19a	24	A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of [Council] OR [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] is subject to standing order 11	A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to standing order 11	
19b	24	Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or, if he is not available, the vice-chair (if there is one) of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] at its next meeting.	Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Clerk shall notify the chair of the absence occasioned by illness or other reason and the Clerk shall report such absence at the next Council meeting.	
19c	24	The chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of [the member of staff's job title]. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee]	The chair or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Council].	

SO Ref.	Page no.	Text	Clerk's Recommendation	Council Determination
19d	24	Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] or in their absence, the vice-chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee] in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee].	Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Clerk shall contact the Council chair in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.	
19e	24	Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by [the member of staff's job title] relates to the chair or vice-chair of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee], this shall be communicated to another member of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee], which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of [the () committee] OR [the () sub-committee].	Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Council this shall be communicated to another member of the Council which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council	
20b	25	[If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) exceeds £200,000] The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.	The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.	

SO Ref.	Page no.	Text	Clerk's Recommendation	Council Determination
23b	26	<p>Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.</p> <p>The above is applicable to a Council without a common seal.</p>	Adopt as presented	
24b	27	Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.	Can be arranged if required. Agree with Cllr. Baker that he wishes this?	
26b	27	A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least () councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.	Suggest at least three Councillors' written notice is required.	

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Grievance Procedure

Drafted	July 2025
Adopted	
Review Period	2 Years
Next Review	2027
Author	Allan Drew, Clerk

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Informal grievance procedure

In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee is encouraged to first discuss any grievance with the Chair of the Parish Council, with a view to resolving the matter informally if possible (and appropriate). If the employee feels that this is not appropriate or they wish to pursue a formal grievance they should follow the procedure detailed below.

2. Formal grievance procedure

2.1 The employee must set out their grievance in writing (“Statement of Grievance”) and provide a copy to the Chair.

2.2 The Chair will arrange a specially convened subcommittee of the Parish Council to discuss the matter and invite the employee to attend that meeting. The employee should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. Grievance meetings will normally be convened within 14 days of the Council receiving the Statement of Grievance. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a representative or colleague. If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or their representative, the employee has the right to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

2.3 A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the subcommittee time to consider the fairest outcome.

2.4 After the meeting the employee will be informed of the subcommittee’s decision decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

2.5 If the employee wishes to appeal against the Council’s decision they must inform the Chairman within 5 working days of receiving the decision.

2.6 The employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting. The appeal will be heard by three Councillors who were not involved with the original hearing/decision. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a representative or colleague.

2.7 A grievance appeal meeting will normally be convened within 15 working days of the Chairman receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 2.5 above. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion, the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

2.8 After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the final decision within 5 working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

3 Modified Council grievance procedure for former employees

3.1 If an ex-employee wishes to raise a grievance, they must set out their grievance and the basis for that grievance in writing to the Chair.

3.2 Following receipt of a statement of grievance as in 3.1 above, the Chair will write to the ex-employee inviting them to choose one of the following-

attend a meeting to discuss the grievance,

or

have the Parish Council respond to the grievance in writing.

If the ex-employee does not agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence then within 7 working days of that choice the above steps 2.1 to 2.4 of the standard council grievance procedure will be followed

If the ex-employee does agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence, the Council will consider his or her grievance. Council will inform the ex-employee in writing within 14 days of the receipt of such confirmation setting out the basis for the Council's decision.

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Draft Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Drafted	2025
Adopted	
Review Period	5 Years
Last Reviewed	
Next Review	2030
Author	Allan Drew, Clerk

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

- 1 This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice (<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174>).
- 2 It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf
- 3 The policy is designed to help Council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their job. Wherever possible, the Council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.
- 4 The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5 This policy confirms:
 - informal coaching and supervision will be considered, where appropriate, to improve conduct and / or attendance
 - the Council will fully investigate the facts of each case
 - the Council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective. For more information see ACAS "Performance Management" at <https://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6608>
 - employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case
 - employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing
 - employees may be accompanied or represented by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official - at any investigatory, disciplinary or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. Employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make written submissions
 - if the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within 7 calendar days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
 - any changes to specified time limits in the Council's procedure must be agreed by the employee and the Council
 - information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the Council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision. The appeal decision is final
- if an employee who is already subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure
- disciplinary action taken by the Council can include a written warning, final written warning or dismissal
- this procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this
- except for gross misconduct when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the Council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct
- if an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The Council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it,
- the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the consent of affected parties

Examples of misconduct

6 Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct: The list is not exhaustive.

- unauthorised absence
- poor timekeeping
- misuse of the Council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet
- inappropriate behaviour
- refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- breach of health and safety rules.

Examples of gross misconduct

7 Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct: The list is not exhaustive

- bullying, discrimination and harassment
- incapacity at work because of alcohol or drugs
- violent behaviour
- fraud or theft
- gross negligence
- gross insubordination
- serious breaches of council policies and procedures e.g. the Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Data Protection Policy and any policies regarding the use of information technology
- serious and deliberate damage to property
- use of the internet or email to access pornographic, obscene or offensive material
- disclosure of confidential information.

Suspension

- 8 If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may suspend the employee while further investigations are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.
- 9 While on suspension, the employee is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council needs to make contact. The employee must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or to discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.
- 10 The employee must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

Examples of unsatisfactory work performance

- 11 The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance: The list is not exhaustive.
 - inadequate application of management instructions/office procedures
 - inadequate IT skills
 - unsatisfactory management of staff
 - unsatisfactory communication skills.

The Procedure

- 12 Preliminary enquiries_ The council may make preliminary enquiries to establish the basic facts of what has happened in order to understand whether there may be a case to answer under the disciplinary procedure.
- 13 If the employee's manager believes there may be a disciplinary case to answer, the council may initiate a more detailed investigation undertaken to establish the facts of a situation or to establish the perspective of others who may have witnessed misconduct. Should the employee not have a line manager (e.g. the Clerk) then the Council Chair will form a subcommittee (the staffing committee) of three Councillors to establish the facts
- 14 Informal Procedures. Where minor concerns about conduct become apparent, it is the manager's responsibility to raise this with the employee and clarify the improvements required. A file note will be made and kept by the manager. The informal discussions are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. If the conduct fails to improve, or if further matters of conduct become apparent, the manager may decide to formalise the discussions and invite the employee to a first stage disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary investigation

- 15 A formal disciplinary investigation may sometimes be required to establish the facts and whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.
- 16 If a formal disciplinary investigation is required, the Council's staffing committee will appoint an Investigator who will be responsible for undertaking a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The Investigator will be independent and will normally be a councillor. If the staffing committee considers that there are no councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council. The Investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The staffing committee will inform the Investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should specify:

- the allegations or events that the investigation is required to examine
 - whether a recommendation is required
 - how the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a written report
 - who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.
- 17 The Investigator will be asked to submit their findings usually within 35 Calendar days of appointment where possible. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory performance or of allegations of minor misconduct, the appointment of an investigator may not be necessary and the Council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage - the disciplinary meeting (see paragraph 22).
- 18 The staffing committee will notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and details of the person undertaking the investigation. The employee may be asked to meet an investigator as part of the disciplinary investigation. The employee will be given sufficient notice of the meeting with the Investigator so that they have reasonable time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of that process. The employee will be provided with a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure. The Council will also inform the employee that when they meets with the Investigator, they will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.
- 19 Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting.
- 20 If there are other persons (e.g. employees, councillors, members of the public or the Council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the Investigator should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.
- 21 The Investigator has no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the staffing committee whether or not disciplinary action should be considered under the policy.
- 22 The Investigator's report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:
- the employee has no case to answer and there should be no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure
 - the matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally or
 - the employee has a case to answer and a formal hearing should be convened under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- 23 The Investigator will submit the report to the staffing committee which will decide whether further action will be taken.
- 24 If the Council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The disciplinary meeting

- 25 If the staffing committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a staffing sub-committee of 3 councillors, to formally hear the allegations. The staffing sub-committee will appoint a Chair from one of its members. The Investigator shall not sit on the sub-committee.

- 26 No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The sub-committee's letter will confirm the following:
- the names of its Chair and other two members
 - details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting
 - a copy of the information provided to the sub-committee which may include the investigation report, supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure
 - the time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that they has sufficient time to prepare for it
 - that witnesses may attend on the employee's and the Council's behalf and that both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least 2 working days before the meeting
 - that the employee may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official
- 27 The purpose of the disciplinary meeting hearing is for the allegations to be put to the employee and then for the employee to give their perspective. It will be conducted as follows:
- the Chair will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee and explain the arrangements for the hearing
 - the Chair will set out the allegations and invite the Investigator to present the findings of the investigation report (if there has been a previous investigation)
 - the Chair will invite the employee to present their account
 - the employee (or the companion) will set out their case and present evidence (including any witnesses and/or witness statements)
 - any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the Investigator and any witness
 - the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up
- 28 The Chair will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The Chair will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision.
- 29 The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be further investigated by the sub-committee.

Disciplinary action

- 30 If the sub-committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

First written warning

- 31 If the employee's conduct has fallen beneath acceptable standards, a first written warning will be issued. A first written warning will set out:
- the reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
 - that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
 - the employee's right of appeal
 - that a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Final written warning

- 32 If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve sufficiently during the currency of a prior warning, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:
- the reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
 - that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
 - the employee's right of appeal
 - that a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Dismissal

- 33 The Council may dismiss:
- for gross misconduct
 - if there is no improvement within the specified time period, in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning
 - if another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force.
- 34 The Council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, they will receive a written statement of the reasons for their dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of their right of appeal. If the sub-committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action taken as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal

- 35 An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. Their written notice of appeal must be received by the Council within 7 calendar days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.
- 36 The grounds for appeal include;
- a failure by the Council to follow its disciplinary policy
 - the sub-committee's disciplinary decision was not supported by the evidence
 - the disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case
 - new evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting.
- 37 Where possible, the appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the Investigator. There may be insufficient members of the staffing committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of 3 members of the Council who may include members of the staff committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.
- 38 The employee will be notified, in writing, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
- 39 At the appeal meeting, the Chair will:
- introduce the panel members to the employee

- explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the disciplinary decision
 - explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
- 40 The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds for appeal.
- 41 The Chair will inform the employee that they will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.
- 42 The appeal panel may decide to uphold the disciplinary decision of the staffing committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file.
- 43 If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved.
- 44 The appeal panel's decision is final.