



CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5NJ

TEL: 01608 642341

Email: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

TOWN CLERK: Luci Ashbourne

6th July 2022

SUMMONS TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

TO: All Members of the Finance and Resources Committee

VENUE: The Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

DATE: Wednesday 13th July 2022

TIME: 6:30pm

Luci Ashbourne
Town Clerk

Cllrs Ruth Fisher (Chair) Nova Bradley, Sandra Coleman, David Heyes (Vice-Chair), Emily Holmes, Georgia Mazower, Sharon Wheaton and Natasha Whitmill.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.

To receive apologies for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Town Clerk (townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence

2. Declaration of interests.

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct

3. Minutes

- a. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 15th June 2022.

4. Public Participation

The meeting will adjourn for this item

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation

5. Committee Strategic Plan

To define committee priorities for the ensuing municipal year and beyond

6. Income and Expenditure dated 30th June 2022

To receive detailed income and expenditure reports by budget heading

7. Schedule of Payments for Approval

To receive and approve the schedule of payments from the 31st May 2022 – 30th June 2022.

8. Forward work programme

To receive and adopt the following draft policies:

- a. Absence Policy
- b. Expenses Policy
- c. Vexatious Complaints Policy
- d. Member Training Needs Assessment

9. To review the following policies:

- a. Investment strategy
- b. FOI Publication Policy, Scheme and Procedures

10. Communication Strategy

To receive a draft Communication and Engagement Strategy

11. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 21st September 2022, at 6:30pm



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Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

Minutes of a Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on the 15th June 2022, at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall

Present: Cllrs David Heyes, Ruth Fisher, Sharon Wheaton, Sandra Coleman.

Also Present:

Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk

Katherine Jang, Deputy Clerk

Sonia Murgia, Responsible Finance Officer

FR1	Election of Chair Cllrs received nominations to elect the Committee Chair for the municipal year 2022-2023. Cllr Coleman nominated Cllr Fisher, Seconded by Cllr Heyes. All in favour, motion carried. No other nominations were received. All in favour, motion carried. RESOLVED: That Cllr Fisher is elected Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.
FR2	Election of Vice-Chair Cllrs received nominations to elect the Committee Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2022-2023. Cllr Coleman nominated Cllr Heyes, seconded by Cllr Fisher. All in favour. No other nominations were received. All in favour, motion carried. RESOLVED: That Cllr Heyes is elected Vice-Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.
FR3	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Cllrs Holmes and Whitmill
FR4	Declaration of Interests None received
FR5	Minutes <ol style="list-style-type: none">Subject to amendment on P1 – 19:22 time correction Cllrs approved the Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on the 6th April 2022. RESOLVED: That the Chair approves and signs the Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 6th April 2022 as a correct record of the meeting.Cllrs noted the Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on the 22nd April 2022Cllrs noted the Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on the 4th May 2022
FR6	Public Participation None received
FR7	Forward Work Programme Cllrs received the Forward Work Programme. The Clerk noted that the website is now live. Cllrs received the following draft policies:

	<p>a. Mayor's Allowance Policy Cllrs received the Mayor's Allowance Policy. Cllr Heyes proposed to accept the Mayor's Allowance Policy without amendments, and Cllr Fisher seconded. All in favour, motion carried. RESOLVED: That Cllrs adopt the Mayor's Allowance Policy with no further amendments.</p> <p>b. Health and Safety Policy Cllrs received the amended Health and Safety Policy, Cllr Coleman proposed to adopt the policy, and Cllr Wheaton seconded. Motion carried. RESOLVED: That the Council adopts the amended Health and Safety Policy.</p>
FR8	<p>Income and Expenditure and balance sheets for year ending 31st March 2022.</p> <p>a. Cllrs received detailed income and expenditure reports by budget heading</p> <p>The Finance Officer noted that the phone costs have been higher this year due to getting a new phone system, and mobile work phones for staff. Cllrs noted that money not spent that was budgeted for Town Hall promotion. Cllrs queried why the alarm and fire extinguisher inspection was more than expected. The Finance Officer explained that the Town Hall Keeper has had fire warden training. Cllrs noted that the Town Hall water charge seems high as the monthly Legionella testing now comes under that item. Cllrs queried the cost for Cemetery repairs. The Clerk explained that the cost was due to necessary tree works taking place. RESOLVED: That Cllrs approved the income and expenditure report for the year ending 31st March 2022.</p> <p>b. Cllrs received the balance sheet. RESOLVED: That Cllrs approved the balance sheet for the year ending 31st March 2022.</p>
FR9	<p>Schedule of Payments for Approval Cllrs received the schedule of payments from the 25th March 2022 – 5th June 2022. RESOLVED: That Cllrs approve the schedule of payments from the 25th March 2022-5th June 2022.</p>
FR10	<p>Event Booking Management Software Cllrs received and considered a quotation for Facilities Management Booking Software. Cllr Coleman proposed to accept the quote, Cllr Wheaton seconded. All in favour. RESOLVED: That the Council accepts the quotation for Facilities Management Booking Software for £881 for the purchase of the software, £399 for training, and ongoing licencing fees of £302 website integration costing £75 per annum.</p>
FR11	<p>Pest Control Cllrs received a verbal report and quote from the Clerk about pest control measures at Worcester Road Cemetery. Cllrs discussed if there might be alternatives, for instance deterrents, and long-term solutions to the problem. The Clerk queried if any treatment had ever been done before and to the Cllrs knowledge there hadn't. RESOLVED: That Cllrs agree to go ahead with the proposed quote for pest control at Worcester Road Cemetery and to review if further treatment is required at a later date.</p>
FR12	<p>Date of next meeting Wednesday 13th July 2022, at 6:30pm</p>

The Chair closed the meeting at 7:29pm

Agenda item 5 – Committee strategic plan

In order that the Committee and the Council can worked strategically and effectively it is important that a strategic plan is put together.

The Clerk has identified the following projects that this committee are currently or intend on working on in the future:

Action	Whose involved?	Budget	Commencement	Completion	Notes/Comment
Health and Safety Audit	CNTC/Approved consultants	£3800 Telephone £3000 IT hardware/software	May 21	Sept 22	All recommendations following the H&S audit are now either complete or in progress.
Ensuring the Council has modern, workable, compliant policies and procedures	CNTC		May 19	Jan 22	A full list of policies are on the F&R forward work programme and are being worked through systematically.
Ensure that the Council's IT software, hardware, systems and documents are professional, safe and secure.	CNTC/STL Systems		May 21	Ongoing	The Council's IT and phone systems are managed by STL Solutions
Review the Council's fees and charges annually	CNTC	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	January 2023
Appoint the internal auditor	CNTC		Ongoing	Ongoing	To be reviewed September 2022
Develop a Communication Strategy	CNTC	N/A	July 22		Drafted – to be approved
Ensure that the Council is open and transparent	CNTC		Ongoing	Ongoing	New website launched. FOI procedures to be approved.
Ensure that the Council's finances are invested wisely	CNTC				Review investment strategy. Identify investment advisor
Ensure that the Council's website is compliant, accessible, engaging, up to date and relevant	CNTC	£1000	Ongoing	Ongoing	New website launched. CNTC staff to add news articles/agendas and publications. Monthly newsletter
Ensure that staff and members are suitably trained	CNTC	£3000	July 22	Ongoing	Carry out needs assessment.

It is important to note that action plans are fluid and can be subject to change at any time.

Recommendation:

- a. That the Finance and Resources Committee feed into the Council's overall Strategic Plan by adopting a committee action plan.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Finance & resources								
100 Administration								
3210 Admin Charges	7,683	0	5,000	5,000			0.0%	
3211 C N History Trail	27	0	0	0			0.0%	
3290 Miscellaneous Income	12,933	21	0	(21)			0.0%	
3291 Tourist Information	0	0	51	51			0.0%	
Administration :- Income	20,643	21	5,051	5,030			0.4%	0
4100 Salaries/Superann/Nl	96,080	26,499	132,000	105,501		105,501	20.1%	
5110 Stationery	620	94	1,000	906		906	9.4%	
5120 Photocopying Costs	2,617	520	2,600	2,080		2,080	20.0%	
5125 Tourist Information	229	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
5127 C N History Trail	0	(6)	0	6		6	0.0%	
5200 Postage	251	48	700	653		653	6.8%	
5210 Telephone	4,620	1,135	3,800	2,665		2,665	29.9%	
5310 Office Equipment	141	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
5340 Website Costs	4,496	1,520	1,000	(520)		(520)	151.9%	
5360 Computer Hardware/Software	2,078	347	3,000	2,653		2,653	11.6%	
6200 Rent	1,150	0	1,150	1,150		1,150	0.0%	
6210 Rates	2,695	670	2,700	2,030		2,030	24.8%	
7100 Travel & Subsistence	0	29	200	171		171	14.4%	
7300 Staff & Councillors Training	2,698	520	3,000	2,480		2,480	17.3%	
7500 Legal & Professional Fees	695	160	1,500	1,340		1,340	10.7%	
7510 Audit Fees	2,265	1,018	2,500	1,482		1,482	40.7%	
7600 Subscriptions	1,827	1,755	2,000	245		245	87.8%	
7630 Bank Charges	200	7	100	93		93	7.2%	
7650 Insurance	1,458	1,800	1,800	0		0	100.0%	
7710 Election Expenses	0	4,404	4,404	0		0	100.0%	
7720 Other Miscellaneous Expenses	794	25	1,500	1,475		1,475	1.7%	
Administration :- Indirect Expenditure	124,913	40,544	167,454	126,910	0	126,910	24.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(104,269)	(40,523)	(162,403)	(121,880)				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	12,810	0						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(117,079)	(40,523)						
102 Miscellaneous								
3100 Precept Income	315,055	170,420	340,840	170,420			50.0%	
3180 Interest Receivable	244	817	200	(617)			408.4%	
3230 Manorial Land (Pace Petroleum)	15,000	3,750	15,000	11,250			25.0%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
3290 Miscellaneous Income	6,000	6,405	0	(6,405)			0.0%	6,405
Miscellaneous :- Income	336,299	181,392	356,040	174,648			50.9%	6,405
4100 Salaries/Superann/Nl	16,255	3,960	15,700	11,740		11,740	25.2%	
6405 Christmas Late Night Shopping	130	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
6407 Xmas Lights/Trees	13,732	0	15,000	15,000		15,000	0.0%	
6418 Defibrillators	0	296	500	204		204	59.2%	186
6460 Streetscene	11,989	0	10,000	10,000		10,000	0.0%	
6461 HGV signs	0	0	8,000	8,000		8,000	0.0%	
6462 Grit Bins/Snow	(0)	0	3,500	3,500		3,500	0.0%	
6490 Trees/Flower Beds Middle Row	258	25	2,500	2,475		2,475	1.0%	
6495 Street Furniture	2,752	1,420	3,000	1,580		1,580	47.3%	
6498 Contingency Fund	(1,394)	2,648	10,000	7,352		7,352	26.5%	
7100 Travel & Subsistance	927	480	1,600	1,120		1,120	30.0%	
7500 Legal & Professional Fees	23,831	2,183	29,000	26,817		26,817	7.5%	
7720 Other Miscellaneous Expenses	1,291	63	1,250	1,187		1,187	5.1%	
Miscellaneous :- Indirect Expenditure	69,771	11,075	101,050	89,975	0	89,975	11.0%	186
Net Income over Expenditure	266,528	170,317	254,990	84,673				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	7,530	186						
6001 less Transfer to EMR	4,000	6,405						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	270,058	164,098						
<u>104 Youth</u>								
5322 Expenses	6,405	0	19,215	19,215		19,215	0.0%	
Youth :- Indirect Expenditure	6,405	0	19,215	19,215	0	19,215	0.0%	0
Net Expenditure	(6,405)	0	(19,215)	(19,215)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	6,405	0						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	0						
<u>200 Mayors Allowance</u>								
7200 Hospitality & Entertaining	2,385	52	3,000	2,948		2,948	1.7%	
7690 Mayors Allowance	2,730	110	2,800	2,690		2,690	3.9%	
Mayors Allowance :- Indirect Expenditure	5,115	162	5,800	5,638	0	5,638	2.8%	0
Net Expenditure	(5,115)	(162)	(5,800)	(5,638)				
Finance & resources :- Income	356,943	181,413	361,091	179,678			50.2%	
Expenditure	206,204	51,780	293,519	241,739	0	241,739	17.6%	
Net Income over Expenditure	150,739	129,632	67,572	(62,060)				
plus Transfer from EMR	13,935	186						
less Transfer to EMR	16,810	6,405						

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	147,864	123,413						
Community								
<u>101 Grants</u>								
7670 Grants-Voluntary Organisations	31,000	0	26,000	26,000		26,000	0.0%	
7680 Youth Council	0	0	2,500	2,500		2,500	0.0%	
Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	31,000	0	28,500	28,500	0	28,500	0.0%	0
Net Expenditure	(31,000)	0	(28,500)	(28,500)				
<u>110 Town Hall</u>								
3115 Lettings Income	20,059	12,775	26,000	13,225			49.1%	
3140 WODC Water Rates Contrib	81	102	100	(2)			101.9%	
3290 Miscellaneous Income	0	250	0	(250)			0.0%	
Town Hall :- Income	20,140	13,126	26,100	12,974			50.3%	0
4100 Salaries/Superann/Nl	22,715	4,086	19,800	15,714		15,714	20.6%	
5140 Promotion	0	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
5210 Telephone	545	96	630	534		534	15.2%	
6110 Heat and Light	6,016	534	6,000	5,466		5,466	8.9%	
6130 Water & Sewerage	657	574	680	106		106	84.4%	
6210 Rates	10,230	2,562	10,230	7,669		7,669	25.0%	
6230 Window Cleaning	725	105	800	695		695	13.1%	
6240 Alarm/Fire Extinguisher Insp	2,348	193	1,600	1,407		1,407	12.1%	
6310 Cleaning / Sanitary Expenses	1,180	376	1,500	1,124		1,124	25.1%	
6330 Waste Disposal	555	291	600	309		309	48.5%	
6400 Repairs	2,906	4,553	30,000	25,447		25,447	15.2%	
6408 New Equipment	0	179	2,500	2,321		2,321	7.1%	
7610 Licences	605	620	800	180		180	77.5%	
7650 Insurance	2,834	2,800	3,000	200		200	93.3%	
7720 Other Miscellaneous Expenses	567	26	500	474		474	5.3%	
Town Hall :- Indirect Expenditure	51,882	16,995	80,140	63,145	0	63,145	21.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(31,742)	(3,868)	(54,040)	(50,172)				
<u>120 Greystones</u>								
3110 Rents Receivable	2,040	250	2,040	1,790			12.3%	
3111 Rugby Club Right Of Access	175	0	175	175			0.0%	
Greystones :- Income	2,215	250	2,215	1,965			11.3%	0

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
6210 Rates	60	46	375	329		329	12.2%	
6400 Repairs	1,519	0	2,500	2,500		2,500	0.0%	
7650 Insurance	227	300	300	0		0	100.0%	
Greystones :- Indirect Expenditure	1,805	346	3,175	2,829	0	2,829	10.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	410	(96)	(960)	(864)				
130 Cemetery								
3190 Interments & Memorials	14,969	4,400	11,200	6,800			39.3%	
3191 Grave Purchase	7,040	2,295	4,000	1,705			57.4%	
Cemetery :- Income	22,009	6,695	15,200	8,505			44.0%	0
6130 Water & Sewerage	69	30	100	70		70	30.4%	
6210 Rates	1,258	358	1,000	642		642	35.8%	
6400 Repairs	200	2,600	1,000	(1,600)		(1,600)	260.0%	2,600
6465 Contract	11,156	1,861	12,500	10,639		10,639	14.9%	
6471 Skips for cemetery	720	0	600	600		600	0.0%	
7650 Insurance	454	500	600	100		100	83.3%	
7720 Other Miscellaneous Expenses	314	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	14,171	5,350	16,300	10,950	0	10,950	32.8%	2,600
Net Income over Expenditure	7,838	1,345	(1,100)	(2,445)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	0	2,600						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	7,838	3,945						
140 Closed Churchyard								
6400 Repairs	1,515	260	1,500	1,240		1,240	17.3%	
6468 Maintenance incl. drains	2,234	698	3,700	3,003		3,003	18.9%	
Closed Churchyard :- Indirect Expenditure	3,749	958	5,200	4,243	0	4,243	18.4%	0
Net Expenditure	(3,749)	(958)	(5,200)	(4,243)				
151 Recreation								
6200 Rent	1,000	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
6400 Repairs	1,983	2,897	4,500	1,603		1,603	64.4%	
6410 New Equipment	7,955	0	30,000	30,000		30,000	0.0%	
6413 Sports Awards	305	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
6420 Litter/Dog Bin Emptying	4,364	2,455	6,500	4,045		4,045	37.8%	
6465 Contract	7,341	919	5,200	4,281		4,281	17.7%	
7650 Insurance	2,700	2,225	2,700	475		475	82.4%	

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
7720 Other Miscellaneous Expenses	447	15	1,000	985		985	1.5%	
Recreation :- Indirect Expenditure	26,095	8,511	51,400	42,889	0	42,889	16.6%	0
Net Expenditure	(26,095)	(8,511)	(51,400)	(42,889)				
<u>160 Events</u>								
6414 Annual Events	0	132	9,500	9,368		9,368	1.4%	
6419 Occasional Events	0	1,539	2,500	961		961	61.5%	
Events :- Indirect Expenditure	0	1,670	12,000	10,330	0	10,330	13.9%	0
Net Expenditure	0	(1,670)	(12,000)	(10,330)				
<u>180 Pool Meadow</u>								
6417 Maintenance	120	0	7,000	7,000		7,000	0.0%	
Pool Meadow :- Indirect Expenditure	120	0	7,000	7,000	0	7,000	0.0%	0
Net Expenditure	(120)	0	(7,000)	(7,000)				
<u>185 Millennium Garden</u>								
6417 Maintenance	11	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
6465 Contract	1,266	150	1,500	1,350		1,350	10.0%	
Millennium Garden :- Indirect Expenditure	1,277	150	1,500	1,350	0	1,350	10.0%	0
Net Expenditure	(1,277)	(150)	(1,500)	(1,350)				
<u>186 War Memorial</u>								
6465 Contract	127	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
6470 War Memorial	400	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
War Memorial :- Indirect Expenditure	527	0	700	700	0	700	0.0%	0
Net Expenditure	(527)	0	(700)	(700)				
Community :- Income	44,364	20,071	43,515	23,444			46.1%	
Expenditure	130,627	33,979	205,915	171,936	0	171,936	16.5%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(86,263)	(13,908)	(162,400)	(148,492)				
plus Transfer from EMR	0	2,600						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(86,263)	(11,308)						

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/06/2022

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Grand Totals:- Income	401,307	201,484	404,606	203,122			49.8%	
Expenditure	336,831	85,760	499,434	413,674	0	413,674	17.2%	
Net Income over Expenditure	64,476	115,724	(94,828)	(210,552)				
plus Transfer from EMR	13,935	2,786						
less Transfer to EMR	16,810	6,405						
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	61,601	112,105						

List of Payments made between 31/05/2022 and 30/06/2022

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
01/06/2022	Adobe Systems Software	DD	12.64		Adobe Software subscription
07/06/2022	British Gas	DD	182.61		Gas T/H- April/May
08/06/2022	Screwfix direct	PAYPAL	29.99	RP/DH	Doorbell-Guildhall
10/06/2022	Canva Pty Limited	DD	10.99		Canva subscription
10/06/2022	Castle Water Limited	Online	1.64		Water-Cemetery
10/06/2022	Sutcliffe Play (South West) Li	Online1	35.14		Nu & Bolt-Rec Repairs
10/06/2022	GH Safety Ltd	Online2	768.00		H&S training/Risk Ass.
10/06/2022	LGRC Associates Ltd	Online3	489.36		HR advice-T/H keeper
10/06/2022	Thomas Cleaning Ltd	Online4	124.32		Cleaning T/H
10/06/2022	Gill & Co (Ironmongers) Limite	Online5	26.12		Various items
10/06/2022	██████████	ONLINE	1,220.00	DH/RP	Restoration of public benches
10/06/2022	J English Window Cleaning	ONLINE	150.00	DH/RP	Flags & bunting-Jubilee
10/06/2022	J English Window Cleaning	ONLINE	125.00	DH/RP	Bus shelter cleaning
10/06/2022	Castle Water Limited	Online	28.79		Water-Cemetery
10/06/2022	Castle Water Limited	Online1	1.64		P/Ledger Electronic Payment
15/06/2022	LGRC Associates Ltd	Online	924.00		Clerk support-May/June
15/06/2022	McCracken & Sons Ltd	Online1	1,367.24		Grounds maintenance-May
15/06/2022	██████████	ONLINE	15.30	DH/RP	Mileage-Brackley
15/06/2022	C/N Town Festival	ONLINE	550.00	DH/RP	Contribution-Jubilee
16/06/2022	Suregreen Ltd	PAYPAL	22.32	DH/RP	Fixing pegs-Rec
20/06/2022	Viking	Online2	157.87		Display board-Clrs surgery
20/06/2022	Unity Trust Bank	ONLINE	7,844.56	RP/DH	Salaries-June
20/06/2022	Community First Oxfordshire	ONLINE	85.00	RP/JG	Community First membership
20/06/2022	Ubico Limited	Online	181.84		Dog/Litter bins emptying-June
21/06/2022	Adobe Systems Software	DD	15.17		Adobe subscription
23/06/2022	Thames Valley Water Services L	Online	48.00		T/H water temp.monitoring-June
23/06/2022	HMRC	ONLINE	1,786.27	RP/JG	Tax/NI-June
23/06/2022	██████████	ONLINE	10.00	RP/JG	Telephone-June
23/06/2022	OCC Pension Fund	ONLINE	2,430.19	RP/JG	Pension contr.-June
24/06/2022	STL Communications Limited	DD	529.02		Telephone- May
27/06/2022	Zoom Video Communications Inc.	DD	11.99		Zoom subscription
30/06/2022	Unity Trust Bank	DD	7.20		Bank charges
Total Payments			19,192.21		

CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: GOVERNANCE for F&R Cttee Meeting June 2022

Shaded areas are top priorities and have updates

Governance Area	Document or Process	Checklist	Comment
Constitutional	Standing Orders (SOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid set to be adopted which includes all statutory requirements (ideally based on NALC Model) Reviewed annually and as required for law changes 	<p>Council's adopted updated SOs 15 March 2021 Reviewed May 2022</p> <p>Review date – May 2023</p>
	Scheme of Delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme has been adopted and is used The scheme details clearly the delegations to officers and committees as applicable Staff and members are aware of the scheme 	<p>New Scheme of Delegation adopted 21 December 2020</p> <p>Reviewed May 2022</p> <p>Review date – May 2023</p>
	Ethical Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A code of conduct for members adopted in accordance with the Localism Act and all members have a copy All members have completed a register of members' interests form and it is published on principal authority website and parish/town if they have a website 	<p>A copy of the latest WODC code of conduct has been identified. All Cllrs elected in May 2021 have signed up to this. To be taken for adoption to Sept Full Council.</p> <p>New members have completed register of interests. Clerk to re-</p>

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			circulate. Publish on website when ready
	Transparency Code – Published Info on website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure over £500 • Contracts and tender Invitations over £5000 • Land and building assets • Grants • Organisation chart (plus staff over £50K) 	Transparency code - Drafting
	Policies, Statements, Protocols & Plans	<p><u>Policies in Staff handbook – approved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary and grievance • IT Policy • Appraisal Policy • Training and Development Policy • General Data Protection Regulations Policy • Equality and Diversity Policy • Lone working <p><u>Other policies approved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant awarding policy • FOI (2000 act and Model Publication Scheme) • Press & Media • Document retention policy • Recording meetings policy • Whistle blowing/raising concerns including internal reporting policy • Bullying and Harassment/Dignity at Work • Complaints policy/procedure • Mayor's allowance <p><u>Heath and Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&S Policy <p><u>For approval at this meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence • Homeworking/Flexible working • Expenses – staff and members • Vexatious complaints policy 	<p>There are two policies for Committee to consider at this meeting:</p> <p>Vexatious complaints policy and procedure.</p> <p>Absence</p> <p>Homeworking/Flexible working</p> <p>Expenses</p> <p>Member training needs assessment</p> <p>Investment policy (review)</p> <p>Priority for the next meeting:</p> <p>Anti-fraud, anti-bribery and corruption</p> <p>Community Engagement</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment policy/statement • Member training needs assessment <p>Forward work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings/Assets Management Plan • Anti-fraud, anti-bribery and corruption • Community engagement policy • Communications policy/strategy • Officer/Member protocol – Deferred to staffing sub-committee October 2021 • Social Media 	Social Media
Financial	Financial Regulations (FRs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid set adopted which includes all requirements of Accounts and Audit Regs and Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners Guide • Reviewed annually and as required for law changes – check that updated for latest law changes • Spending limits for staff are reasonable and appropriate and increased annually • Tender process is clearly defined and staff and members are aware of and have knowledge of it • All payments made in accordance with FRs and reported to Council • The process for electronic payments is clearly defined and staff and members are aware of it and have knowledge of the process • Electronic payment process is in line with good practice advice 	<p>Adopted 10 February 2021</p> <p>Reviewed – May 2022</p> <p>Review date – May 2023</p>
	Annual Return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Plan is in place to complete the return as required within the legal timeframe • Members are aware of their responsibilities and the governance statement • Outcome from the external auditor is acted upon and reported to Members 	<p>2019/20 completed.</p> <p>2020/21 completed.</p> <p>2022/22 to be commenced April 2022 (links & documentation received from external auditor by email 23rd March 2022)</p>

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	Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent and competent internal auditor is appointed in accordance with Council procedures, and has direct access to the RFO, clerk and members should it be required • Reports go to Council/Committee as appropriate 	Complete
	Budget Setting Process & Monitoring & Precept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget setting process is open and transparent, and the budget headings are clear and appropriate • Budget setting meeting agendas and supporting documents available to members and the public • A report explaining the budget (particularly any increase) is provided along with a funding breakdown showing precept, band D equivalent with any increase/decrease and any other income 	<p>Process 2022/23 was completed at the 17th January 2022 Council mtg.</p> <p>Process 2023/24 to commence through the Sept-Nov Committee Cycle. Draft Budget to November 2022 F&R meeting approved at Full Council 7th December 2022.</p>
	Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grant policy is in place, agreed by Council and widely available to members and the public • The policy is clear and easy to follow and understand • Applications are widely available and the application process is easy to understand with clear guidance to applicants • Applicants encouraged to attend the meeting where a decision will be taken and allowed to speak • Clear budgetary provision is made 	Responsibility for Grants policy transferred to Community Committee
Risk Management	Strategy & Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy and policy has been agreed by Council and understood by all staff • The policy includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Continuity Plan ▪ Disaster Recovery Plan including data back-up off site ▪ Health & Safety ▪ Buildings & Assets ▪ Financial issues and appropriate budgetary provision 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal or any other potential action against the Council 	
	Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual risk assessment is completed for all activities and an action plan is completed and agreed by Council • Any new activities are added throughout the year • Staff and members have received appropriate training in risk assessment 	Reviewed in February 2020. Reviewed by Full Council in May 2022.
	Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual review is completed in line with Council policy/FRs • Payment process made in line with FRs • Adequate, appropriate and realistic provisions are made within the insurance policy, including fidelity insurance cover 	Reviewed February 2020 & policy renewed March 2021
	GDPR and FOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a publication scheme under the FOI which is clear and based on the model public scheme policy issued by the ICO • The Council has met all the requirements of the GDP Regs. • The scheme is publicised widely and all staff and members and aware of it and have knowledge of it • The policy makes it clear and easy to understand how to make a request under the FOI act and how to deal with vexatious and/or multiple requests 	GDPR is complete FOI publication scheme complete
	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a social media policy which includes use of Facebook and Twitter and other forms of social media • The policy clearly defines the use of social media and who has day to day responsibility • The policy includes the process for dealing with any vexatious issues or problems that arise 	Policy re staff use considered by Staffing Sub-Committee 8 February 2021 but organisational approach and Cllrs' use still to be addressed.
	Press and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a policy for dealing with the press and media, which makes it clear who speaks to the press/media on behalf of the Council 	Policy approved

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and members are aware of and have knowledge of the policy and receive appropriate training• The policy clearly defines how staff deal with requests from the press/media• The Council makes full use of press/media releases, with clearly defined responsibility for who deals with the releases	
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Chipping Norton Town Council

ABSENCE POLICY

Adopted on xxx
Review date xxx

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What to do if you are unwell

If you are away from work because of sickness you must:

- Telephone the Clerk, before your contractual (or normal start time for work) on the first day of absence providing details and how long you expect to be off. If you are unable to call personally, someone else may call for you. It is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified. You must then telephone again each day (unless otherwise agreed with the Clerk).
- If you are the Clerk, you must inform the Deputy Clerk as stated above.
- If you are away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), you must complete a self-certification form and provide it to the council when you are back at work.
- If you are away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), you must send in a 'fit to work' statement from your doctor and continue to do so as each new certificate is issued to you. This certificate gives details as to whether you are too ill to work or whether you are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council. This gives you and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support your return to work. The form also gives more space for the doctor to provide information about your condition and helpful tick boxes to suggest common ways to help you return to work.
- All sickness or injury absence will be entered on your employment record and will be monitored from time-to-time.

Return-to-work meetings

On the first day back at work after a period of sickness absence your manager may want to meet informally. If this is not possible on your first day back, the meeting may take place later. The return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions should be private and confidential. The meeting would normally include:

- a welcome back to work;
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting; which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate;
- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way and to understand whether the council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance;
- explain that the absence will be recorded;
- establish if medical advice has been sought (if appropriate);
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a fit note from the doctor has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps; and
- a handover of work where appropriate.

Medical appointments

The council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the council. The council will allow reasonable time off work for such appointments, and expects the time to be made up as soon as possible.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are ill and unable to attend work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). SSP is currently paid after 4 Qualifying Days absence from work. The Qualifying Days are your normal working days that are in your contract. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted from SSP and if you earn below the lower earnings limit, you will not qualify for SSP.

Council's Sick Pay

It is the Council's policy to pay you your normal basic rate of pay exclusive of overtime/allowances during periods of sickness absence as stated in your contract (see note 1). This occupational sick pay will be for absences due to sickness calculated over the previous 52 weeks and will include your entitlement to SSP.

Payment is, however, conditional upon you complying with the council's procedure for notifying your manager of the absence, attending an interview with your manager on request to discuss the absence, and completing a self-certification form on return to work or providing a fit-note when requested. We may also ask you to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor at the request of the Council.

We may not pay you occupational sick pay where:

- you have failed to comply with the Council's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- you unreasonably refuse to attend a sickness absence meeting with the Council on request;
- you are unable to work because you hurt yourself in dangerous sports / activities or any other occupation you have;
- you have misled the council about your fitness to work;
- you have resigned; or
- where disciplinary proceedings are pending against you.

Medical advice

The Council may want to obtain advice on your fitness for work from occupational health advisers or medical practitioners. Examples of when the Council might refer to occupational health or a medical practitioner include the following:

- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury;
- to establish when you might be able to return to work;
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties;
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition;
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work;
- to understand the likely recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work; and
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability, if you are disabled.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you.

If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Persistent short-term absence

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness. We understand most employees will have some short-term sickness absence from time to time. However, if you are frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on your colleagues and Councillors.

Therefore, it is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently and in some circumstances, the Council may begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process. If we do so, we will meet with you to set attendance targets. Following a review meeting we may issue a formal warning if those targets are not met. You will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting and you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. You may appeal against a formal warning. If your absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the council may bring your employment to an end following consultation with you.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition then we will also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician or your G.P. or consultant to establish further information about your health and how the council can support your attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the council will not consider any pregnancy related absence. The council will also make adjustments where absences are related to a disability by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The council will consider any alternative employment options before making any decision about ending employment. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal sanction. The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Long-term absence

As a guide, long-term absence is any absence which lasts or is expected to last over 4 weeks. In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with you. In cases where the return date is less certain this will take the form of consultation and will include:

- Discussions at the start of the absence and periodically throughout
- Obtaining better information on your health and likely prognosis, ideally through an Occupational Health Physician
- Where appropriate alerting you to the fact that your absence is becoming a problem, and
- Allowing you the opportunity to state your opinion of your condition and giving consideration to that opinion

Where ill-health means that you are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the council may need to consider bringing your employment to an end. In these circumstances, the council will:

- Review your absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult with you
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice

- Advise you in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- Discuss whether you may be able to access benefits from the Local Government Pension Scheme (where appropriate).
- Meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing you to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- Review if there are any alternative jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health
- Following this meeting, inform you of the final decision

Absence as a result of disability

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010 (formerly as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

Data protection

The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data will be provided in our employee privacy notice. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Important notice

This document is modelled on a document commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication.

This document has been written by the HR Services Partnership – a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils.

Please contact them on 01403 240 205 for information about their services.

Notes

1. Green Book terms

If the council adopts Green Book terms and conditions of employment, employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods: -

During 1st year of service

1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service)

2 months half pay

During 2nd year of service

2 months full pay and

2 months half pay

During 3rd year of service

4 months full pay and

4 months half pay

During 4th and 5th year of service

5 months full pay and

5 months half pay

After 5 years' service

6 months full pay and

6 months half pay

The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Periods of full pay will include SSP. In periods of half pay, employees receive half pay in addition to SSP provided the total does not exceed normal pay.

If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended.

2. Council's Sick Pay

The legal requirement is to pay Statutory Sick Pay (subject to eligibility) and anything additional is for the council to decide. Any additional sick pay is known as 'occupational sick pay' (OSP). The council will need to commit to paying any OSP it decides to offer and take into account the cost of National Insurance and the cost of any temporary staff required to cover the absence.

It would be unusual to bring an employment contract to an end before the occupational sick pay expires.

If a member of staff already has a paid sick leave entitlement, Council cannot unilaterally change their entitlement. Councils can change the policy for all new staff joining after a defined date provided this is consistently applied.

3. Return-to-work meetings

Return to work meetings should ideally take place following every absence, with notes taken, agreed and stored on file. They are especially important if the absence has been caused by, or related to incidents at work. Having a written record of a return-to-work meeting may help the council defend later claims or allegations.

Sometimes it is not practical to have return-to-work interviews after every absence so councils may decide to do so only after 2 absences in a 2-month period, or where the absence is work-related.

4. Medical appointments

There is no legal requirement to pay time off for medical appointments, except antenatal appointments. Staff should make up time as soon as possible.

5. Medical advice

Health information is considered to be personal sensitive information under Data Protection legislation and particular care must be taken when processing medical information. The Information Commissioner website (<https://ico.org.uk>) contains guidance.

An Occupational Health report can comment on an individual's health in relation to the employee's role. It will be important to provide the OH physician or nurse a referral form with full details of the employee's job, the concerns you have about their health in relation to their work and be specific about the questions you need answering. Any report should then be discussed with the employee before the council decides on any follow up actions. If the report makes recommendations, these must be carefully considered and discussed with the employee.

6. Health and wellbeing

All employers have duty to provide a safe place of work which includes the physical environment as well as mental health. There are a range of initiatives that can promote health and wellbeing (see Fit for Work: <https://fitforwork.org>). Also, the Health and Safety Executive has useful information on their website including a stress risk assessment (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/risk-assessment.htm).

DRAFT

SICKNESS SELF-CERTIFICATION ABSENCE FORM

Note: This form should be completed on your return to work following any period of sickness of *7 calendar days or less* and handed to your immediate superior.

If you are returning to work after a sickness absence of *more than 7 days* you should provide a *Medical Certificate* to your immediate superior.

Name		
Dept. No.		
Date of sickness (including non-working days)		
From am / pm Day
Date/...../.....	
To am / pm Day
Date/...../.....	
Date of absence		
From am / pm Day
Date/...../.....	
To am / pm Day
Date/...../.....	
Did you inform the Company on your first day of sickness/absence?	Yes / No	
If yes, to whom did you report this information?		
Details of sickness or injury:		

Did you consult a medical practitioner?

Yes / No

If yes, please give details of doctor's name, address, date of visit, treatment received and any current treatment

DECLARATION

I certify that I have been incapable of work because of my sickness/injury on the dates shown above and that this information is true and accurate.

I acknowledge that false information will result in disciplinary action.

I hereby give my employer permission to verify the above information.

Signed

Immediate superior



CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

Expenses Policy & Procedure

Purpose

This policy sets out Council's rules on how employees and Councillors can claim for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that legitimate expenses are properly reimbursed and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

General procedure

Council will reimburse actual expenditure that is incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in connection with authorised duties undertaken in the course of Council business. To claim for expenses, Council's expenses claim forms must be used setting out the reasons why the expense was incurred on the claim form. (Refer to the appendix for the Councillors' claim form.)

Expenses will not be paid unless supporting evidence is provided, together with a completed expense claim form. This should include original receipts or invoices with the date and time of the transaction (unless the claim is for mileage). When claiming for travel expenses on public transport, tickets should be enclosed showing the departure point and destination of the journey, where possible. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted. VAT receipts should set out:

- the name and VAT registration number of the retailer or service provider;
- the goods and services provided; and
- the amount of VAT payable.

Once completed and signed, expense forms should be submitted to the Clerk for approval. Once approved the claim form should be sent to the RFO for payment.

Claims must be submitted within 60 days of the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from the Clerk. Council reserves the right to withhold any payment where prior written approval has not been given.

Council may return an expense claim form without payment if it is completed incorrectly or lacks supporting evidence.

Council will pay claims for authorised expenses by BACS transfer into the individual's designated account or by cheque.

In general, expenses should not be incurred other than in the categories listed below. Any uncertainty on expenditure eligibility should be discussed in advance with the Clerk and confirmed in writing. Council will accept email as written approval where it is required in this policy.

Training

Attendees on training courses may claim travel expenses for the difference in their usual home to work costs, where applicable. Where the training takes place outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the basis that time spent on training is working time.

Travel

Individuals should consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are less expensive means (for example digital-meeting/conferencing). For local meetings and events the first option to consider is making use of Council's own vehicle when it is available.

Rail

Only standard class rail fares will be reimbursed. Where possible, rail journeys should be arranged in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

Use of own car

It may be appropriate and cost-effective for individuals to use their own car when travelling on Council business, for example where there is limited public transport to the destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport. Any use of their own car on Council business is subject to the individual:

- holding a full UK driving licence;
- ensuring that their car is roadworthy and fully registered; and
- holding comprehensive motor insurance; for employees this must also provide cover for business use.

In the case of staff, prior authorisation should be sought from the Clerk (or the Chair in the case of the Clerk), before an individual should use their own car on business. Council accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey made on Council business. Council will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on an individual's own car (except insofar as the payable mileage rate is deemed to be inclusive).

Council will pay a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for mileage or such other rate as set out from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs. Council will pay for tolls, congestion charges and parking costs incurred, where applicable. If the claimant carries another employee or Councillor in their own car or van on a business journey, the passenger payment rate is 5p per mile.

Use of own bicycle or motorcycle

If use is approved, mileage allowances respectively of 20p and 24p per mile are claimable. Any use of an individual's own motorcycle on business is subject to the same requirements as a car (see above).

Taxis

Unless in the case of unexpected circumstances (for example failure of public transport), any use of taxis will require prior approval and will only be given in limited circumstances. These are:

- where taking a taxi would result in a significantly shorter travel time than using public transport;
- where there are several individuals travelling together on Council business; or
- where personal security and safety is an issue, for example taxis may be permitted after 9.30pm.

Receipts must be obtained with details of the date, place of departure and destination of the journey.

Joint travel

Where more than one member of staff and/or Councillor are attending the same event or otherwise travelling to the same destination in the undertaking of Council-related duties every effort should be made to share the means of transport where it is vehicular in order to minimise costs and adhere to Council's environmental objectives.

Overnight accommodation

As a guideline for travel on Council business accommodation should be booked equivalent to three-star hotel standard or less. A maximum of £120 per night in a major city and £100 elsewhere applies. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that any hotel reservations are cancelled within the required cancellation period if they are no longer required.

Meals

Where required to be away from home on Council business, the individual may claim up to:

- £10 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate);
- £15 for lunch;
- £20 for dinner; and
- a daily allowance of £5 per night for general incidental costs such as a newspaper or telephone calls.

The maximum amounts above are inclusive of drinks. Alcohol cannot be reclaimed under any circumstances.

Receipts/invoices should be supplied for all hotel and meal expenses.

Entertainment/gifts

Council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts. Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered should be reported immediately to the Clerk](or the Chair in the case of the Clerk). As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

Annual events

Council may decide to hold a staff event, such as a Christmas meal or other celebration. Except where agreed to the contrary, attendance is not compulsory, and individuals remain responsible for any expenses incurred.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

Council will not reimburse for:

- the cost of any employee travel between home and usual place of work (except in exceptional circumstances for early morning/late night transport as set out above);
- the cost of any travel undertaken for personal reasons;
- the cost of any travel for a partner or spouse;
- any fines or penalties incurred while on Council business for whatever reason, including penalties for not paying for a rail ticket in advance of boarding the train and penalties or fines associated with motoring offences, including speeding or parking fines, clamping or vehicle recovery charges;
- alcohol; and
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

Individuals are required to pay for any travel costs incurred by their partner or spouse in the event that he or she accompanies them on Council business.

False claims

If Council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on its behalf, it may request further details. Council will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided. Where payment has been made prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it may deduct the value of that claim from an employee's salary or seek reimbursement in the case of a Councillor.

Any abuse of Council's expenses policy will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- false expenses claims;
- claims for expenses that were not legitimately incurred;
- claims for personal gain;
- claims for hospitality and/or gifts without them having been declared; and
- receipt of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence an individual's judgment.

Council may take disciplinary action in the case of an employee, and in all cases report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Adopted: July 2022

Next review due: July 2024 (unless the document below changes sooner)

[Based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model dated December 2019.]

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Councillor Expenses Claim Form for Councillor *(insert name)*

(For guidance refer to the Chipping Norton Town Council Expenses Policy & Procedure)

A: - Details of Mileage claim

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Return Mileage (total miles)</u>	<u>Total claim (45p per mile/5p per passenger)</u>
Total A			£

B: -Details of other expenses

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Expense detail</u>	<u>Total claim £</u>	<u>Receipt attached</u>
Total B			£	

Total A + B	£
--------------------	---

Payment preference: **Cheque:** **BACS:**

For expenses to be received via BACS payment – please complete.

Account name

Sort Code Account number.....

Signed by Councillor

Date

Authorisation only:	
Authorised by (1)	Authorised by (2)
Print name:	Print name
Payment date by Cheque	BACS



Chipping Norton Town Council

Vexatious Complaints Policy

A policy for dealing with abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints and complainants

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy identifies situations where a complainant, either individually or as part of a group, or a group of complainants, might be considered to be habitual or vexatious. The following clauses form the Council policy for ways of responding to these situations.

1.2 In this policy the term habitual means 'done repeatedly or as a habit'. The term vexatious is recognised in law and means 'denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant'. This policy intends to assist in identifying and managing persons who seek to be disruptive to the Council through pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct.

1.3 The term complaint in this policy includes requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 and reference to the Complaints Procedure is, where relevant, to be interpreted as meaning a request under those Acts.

1.4 Habitual or vexatious complaints can be a problem for Council staff and members. The difficulty in handling such complainants is that they are time consuming and wasteful of resources in terms of Officer and Member time. While the Council endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants there are times when there is nothing further which can reasonably be done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.

1.5 Raising of legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses, for example if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as a vexatious or an unreasonably persistent complainant. Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause him or her to be labelled vexatious or unreasonably persistent.

1.6 The aim of this policy is to contribute to the overall aim of dealing with all complainants in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable.

2. Habitual or Vexatious Complainants

2.1 For the purpose of this policy the following definitions of habitual or vexatious complainants will be used: *The repeated and/or obsessive pursuit of:*

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*(1) unreasonable complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes;
and/or*

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(2) *reasonable complaints in an unreasonable manner.*

2.2 Prior to considering its implementation the Council will send a *summary* of this policy to the complainant to give them prior notification of its possible implementation.

2.3 Where complaints continue and have been identified as habitual or vexatious in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 3, the staff and Staffing-Sub committee will seek agreement to treat the complainant as a habitual or vexatious complainant for the appropriate course of action to be taken. Section 4 details the options available for dealing with habitual or vexatious complaints.

2.4 The Clerk on behalf of the Council will notify complainants, in writing, of the reasons why their complaint has been treated as habitual or vexatious and the action that will be taken. District and County Councillors for Chipping Norton Town Council will also be informed that a constituent has been designated as an habitual or vexatious complainant.

2.5 The status of the complainant will be kept under review. If a complainant subsequently demonstrates a more reasonable approach, then their status will be reviewed.

3. Definitions

3.1 Chipping Norton Town Council defines unreasonably persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Council, hinder the Council's consideration of their or other people's complaints.

The description 'unreasonably persistent' and 'vexatious' may apply separately or jointly to a particular complainant.

3.2 Examples include the way in which, or frequency with which, complainants raise their complaints with staff or how complainants respond when informed of the Council's decision about the complaint.

3.3 Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant include the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the person will be considered as being in this category):

An unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant may:

- have insufficient or no grounds for their complaint and be making the complaint only to annoy (or for reasons that they do not admit or make obvious)
- refuse to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance
- refuse to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- refuse to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints policy and procedure despite having been provided with information about the scope of the policy and procedure
- refuse to accept that issues are not within the power of the Council to investigate, change or influence

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- insist on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice (e.g. insisting that there must not be any written record of the complaint)
- make what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seek to have them dismissed or replaced
- make an unreasonable number of contacts with the Council, by any means in relation to a specific complaint or complaints
- make persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to questions, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes telephone calls or e-mails)
- harass or verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff dealing with their complaint, in relation to their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or by the use of offensive and racist language or publish their complaints in other forms of media
- raise subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process
- introduce trivial or irrelevant new information whilst the complaint is being investigated and expect this to be taken into account and commented on
- change the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed
- deny statements he or she made at an earlier stage in the complaint process
- are known to have electronically recorded meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person(s) involved
- adopts a 'scattergun' approach, for instance, pursuing a complaint or complaints not only with the Council, but at the same time with, for example, a Member of Parliament, other Councils, elected Councillors of this and other Councils, the Council's Independent Auditor, the Standards Board, the Police, other public bodies or solicitors
- refuse to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given
- make the same complaint repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints procedure has been concluded and insist that the minor differences make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure
- persistently approach the Council through different routes or other persons about the same issue
- persist in seeking an outcome which Council has explained is unrealistic for legal or policy (or other valid) reasons
- refuse to accept documented evidence as factual
- complain about or challenge an issue based on an historic and/or an irreversible decision or incident
- combine some or all of these features.

4. Imposing Restrictions

4.1 The Council will ensure that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated properly according to the adopted complaints procedure.

4.2 In the first instance the Clerk will consult with the Mayor and the Chair of the Staffing Sub-Committee prior to issuing a warning to the complainant. The Clerk will contact the complainant in writing, or by e-mail, to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour and outline the actions that the Council may take if they do not comply.

4.3 If the disruptive behaviour continues, the Clerk will issue a reminder letter to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the Council in future will be restricted. The Clerk will make this decision in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Staffing Sub-Committee and inform the complainant in writing of what procedures have been put in place and for what period.

4.4 Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with the Council will be appropriate and proportionate and the complainant will be advised of the period of time over which that the restriction will be in place. In most cases restrictions will apply for between three to six months, but in exceptional cases this may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis, or at the next Full Council Meeting.

4.5 Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the complainant and may include:

- banning the complainant from making contact by telephone except through a third party e.g. a solicitor, a Councillor or a friend acting on their behalf
- banning the complainant from sending emails to individuals and/or all Council Officers and insisting they only correspond by postal letter
- requiring contact to take place with one named member of staff only
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and/or times and/or duration
- requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- letting the complainant know that the Council will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated member of staff will be identified who will read future correspondence).

4.6 When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a complainant, the Clerk will contact the complainant in writing to explain:

- why the decision has been taken
- what action has been taken
- the duration of that action.

4.7 The Clerk will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter to the complainant.

4.8 Where a complainant continues to behave in a way that is unacceptable, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the

Communications Committee may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into his or her complaint.

4.9 Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, other options will be considered, e.g. the reporting of the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the complainant may not be given prior warning of that action.

5. New complaints from complainants who are treated as abusive, vexatious or Persistent

5.1 New complaints from people who have come under this policy will be treated on their merits. The Clerk, the Mayor and Chair of the relevant committee will decide whether any restrictions that have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. A blanket policy is not supported, nor ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.

5.2 The fact that a complainant is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and any restrictions imposed on Council's contact with him or her, will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the Council.

6. Review

6.1 The status of a complainant judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be reviewed by the Clerk, the Mayor and Chair of the relevant committee after three months, and at the end of every subsequent three months within the period during which the policy is to apply, or by the next Full Council Meeting.

6.2 The complainant will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy has been changed or extended.

7. Record Keeping

7.1 The Clerk will retain adequate records of the details of the case and the action that has been taken. Records will be kept of:

- the name and address of each member of the public who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent, or any other person who so aids the complainant
- when the restrictions came into force and ends
- what the restrictions are
- when the person and Council were advised.

7.2 Full Council be provided with a regular report giving information about members of the public who have been treated as vexatious/persistent as per this policy.

CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR.....

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Roles and Responsibilities	Feel confident in this area	Require some training in this area	Require full training in this area
Understanding the role of Members or how to be a good councillor			
Understanding the role of Officers or how to ensure staff are used effectively			
Understanding the Council's Code of Conduct or how to behave			
A knowledge of the Council's Core Values and how to put them into practice			
Procedures			
Ability to Chair meetings			
Ability to contribute effectively at meetings			
Understanding the Council's Standing Orders			
Managing working groups			
Law			

The powers & duties of Town Council			
The General Power of Competence			
Finance			
Budget setting and monitoring			
Financial Governance including audit			
The Annual Accounts			
Planning			
Commenting on planning applications			
Local/Neighbourhood plans			
Community Leadership			
Building effective relations with residents and partners			
Championing the interests of local community			
General			
Presentation and public speaking skills			
Negotiation and influencing skills			

IT skills			
Working together with differences / agreeing to disagree / conflict resolution			

If there are any other areas not covered above please list them below:

.....

Please return this form to the Clerk by.....

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CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Adopted by the Town Council on 19 October 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chipping Norton Town Council (the Council) acknowledges the importance of prudently investing the temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the community as part of its fiduciary duty. This Strategy complies with the revised requirements set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments and takes into account Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and guidance within Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioner's Guide 2018.

The Local Government Act 2003 states that a local authority may invest:

- For any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment.
- For the purpose of prudent management of its financial affairs.

1.2 The Council defines its treasury management activities as "the management of the Council's cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of best value performance consistent with those risks."

2. POLICY

This strategy establishes formal objectives, policies and practices and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of the Council's treasury management activities and the associated risks and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Financial Regulations.

3. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1. The Council's investment priorities are:

- the security of its reserves,
- adequate liquidity of its investments, and
- the return on investment – the Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

3.2 All investments will be made in sterling.

3.3 The Department of Communities and Local Government maintains the borrowing of money purely to invest or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Council will not engage in such activity.

3.4 The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by review of credit ratings on a regular basis. The Council will only invest in institutions of high credit quality – based on information from credit rating agencies.

3.5 Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.

4. SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS

4.1 Specified investments are those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year. Such short term investments made with the UK Government or a local authority or town or parish council will automatically be Specified Investments.

4.2 For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, Chipping Norton Town Council will use:

- Deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities
- Other approved public sector investment funds.

4.3 The choice of institution and length of deposit will be at the approval of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

4.4 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

5. NON SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS 5.1

These investments have greater potential risk – examples include investment in the money market, stocks and shares. Given the unpredictability and uncertainty surrounding such investments the Council will not use this type of investment.

6. LIQUIDITY OF INVESTMENTS

6.1 The Finance and General Purposes Committee in consultation with the Responsible Financial Officer will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.

6.2 Investments will be regarded as commencing on the date the commitment to invest is entered into rather than the date on which the funds are paid over to the counterparty.

7. LONG TERM INVESTMENTS

7.1 Long term investments are defined in the Guidance as greater than 12 months.

7.2 The Council does not currently hold any funds in long term investments.

8. INVESTMENT STRATEGY ~~20-21~~ 22-23

8.1 For ~~2020-21~~ 2022-23 the Council will continue to invest as much of its balances as possible in low risk products in order to achieve its investment objectives. This includes any balances that need to be invested being held in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund. All the monies currently held in various CNTC accounts in the HSBC will be moved directly to Unity Trust Bank account(s) and then

~~1) Sufficient funds held in various accounts used for day-to-day accounts will be moved to Unity Trust Instant Access account (s)~~

~~and~~

~~2) Any balances that need to be invested will be moved to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund~~

9. END OF YEAR INVESTMENT REPORT

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9.1 Investment forecasts for the coming financial year will be accounted for when the budget is prepared. At the end of the financial year, the Responsible Financial Officer will report on investment activity to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

10. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS

10.1 The Council's Investment Strategy shall be reviewed annually and revised if considered necessary.

10.2 The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Investment Strategy at any time subject to the approval of Council. Any variations will be made available to the public

11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

11.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council's Investment Strategy will be published on the Town Council's website <https://www.chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk/towncouncil.co.uk> and is also available as hard copy from the Town Council Offices.



CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5NJ

TEL: 01608 642341

E Mail: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

Town Clerk: Ms Luci Ashbourne

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits the Town Council:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

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

What we spend and how we spend it.

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

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

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

How we make decisions.

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

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers.

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

The services we offer.

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

The classes of information will not generally include:

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

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

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

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

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

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

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

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

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

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

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

Information available from Chipping Norton Town Council under the publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained
<p>Class 1 – Who we are and what we do</p> <p>(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>This will be current information only</p>	<p>(Hard copy and/or Website)</p> <p>Hard copy and Website or via Email if practicable</p>
Who's Who on the Council and its Committees	Hard copy and Website
Contact details for The Mayor and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Hard copy and Website
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Hard copy and Website
Staffing structure	Hard copy and Website
<p>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</p> <p>(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p> <p>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</p>	
Annual return form and report by auditor	Hard copy
Finalised budget	Hard copy and website
Precept	Hard copy and website
Borrowing Approval letter	Hard copy (where applicable)
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard copy and website

Grants given and received	Hard copy and website
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy
Members' expenses	Hard copy
Members' allowances	Not applicable

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	
Neighbourhood Plan (Chipping Norton Town Council Neighbourhood Plan)	Hard copy and website
Annual Report to Town Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Hard copy
Quality status	Hard copy
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	Not applicable
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)	
Current and previous council year as a minimum	Hard copy and website
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Hard copy and website
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Hard copy and website
Minutes of meetings (as above) – Note: this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy and Website
Reports presented to council meetings - Note: this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy and website
Responses to consultation papers	Hard copy where available

Responses to planning applications	Hard copy and website
Bye-laws	Hard copy
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)	Hard copy and website
Current information only	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:	Hard copy and website
Procedural standing orders	Hard copy and website
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Hard copy and website
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Hard copy and website
Code of Conduct	Hard copy and website
Policy statements	Hard copy and website
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:	Hard copy
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	
Equality and Diversity policy	Hard copy and website
Health and Safety policy	Hard copy
Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)	Hard copy
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information	Hard copy and Website
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Hard copy Hard copy and website
Information security policy	Hard copy
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Hard copy
Data protection policies	Hard copy and website

Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Hard copy
Class 6 – Lists and Registers	(hard copy; some information may only be available by inspection)
Currently maintained lists and registers only	
Any publicly available register or list	Hard copy
Asset Register	Hard copy
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by Town Councils)	Hard copy
Register of members' interests	Hard copy
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard copy
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)
Current information only	Hard copy and Website
Allotments	Hard copy and website
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Hard copy and website
Town Hall	Hard copy and website
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Hard copy and website
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy
Bus shelters	Hard copy
Markets	Not applicable
Public conveniences	Not applicable
Agency agreements	Not applicable
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Hard copy

Contact details:

The Town Clerk
Chipping Norton Town Council
The Guildhall
Goddards Lane
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire
OX7 5NJ

Tel: 01608 642341 Email: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk Website: www.chippingnortontowncouncil.oc.uk

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

- (i) One copy of any available document will be supplied free of charge to any resident within Chipping Norton
- (ii) Multiple copies of any available document will be supplied to any resident within the Civic Parish of Chipping Norton on payment of the actual cost of copying and postage.
- (iii) Any single copy of any available document, or multiple copies of same, will only be provided to any resident outside the Parish of Chipping Norton or to any company or corporate body, on payment of a sum not exceeding £25.00 for administrative expenses plus the actual cost of copying and postage.

Chipping Norton Town Council

Freedom of Information Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act was introduced to encourage public organisations to publish more information proactively and develop a greater culture of openness. The Act gives a general right of access to information held by the Town Council, subject to certain exemptions outlined in the Act. It applies to information that is held:
- Electronically
 - On paper
- 1.2 Information, which is readily available to members of the public, are those documents listed in the Town Council's Publication Scheme, which is published on the Town Council's website and ensures transparency. Documents within the Publication Scheme are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- 1.3 Requests for information will be considered under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

2. Procedure for Dealing with Requests for Information

- 2.1 Members of the public have a general right of access to information held by the Town Council. This means that they have the following rights:
- To be told whether or not the information is held by the Town Council,
 - And if it is, to have the information communicated to them.
- 2.2 There are certain exemptions and limitations on this general right, but just because a document is marked "Confidential" does not automatically mean that it is exempt information, but it may be covered by certain exemptions. Each case will be dealt with on its merits. Personal information will not be provided if it is in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 2.3 Requests for information must be in writing, must give the applicant's name, an email address, telephone number and a return address and must describe the information requested with a clear description in such a way that we are able to locate it. A written request includes an e-mail.
- 2.4 All written requests for information will be logged on a separate record sheet. Receipt will be acknowledged but if it is possible to respond with the information requested, this will be done instead. If further information is required in order to locate the information requested, this will be undertaken as quickly as possible. All correspondence, phone calls, e-mails etc., that follow the original request will be recorded.

3. Timescales

- 3.1 The Town Council has 20 working days in which to deal with a request for information. If it is not clear what information is required, the 20 day period does not begin until clarification is received from the applicant as to exactly what is required.

- 3.2 The Town Council will inform the individual if we require longer than the 20 days to apply the public interest test and the individual will be informed at that point what exemptions are being looked at and how long it will take. If more time is require then up to a maximum of a further 20 days can be added so the total time will be 40 working days.

4. Refusal

- 4.1 The Town Council may refuse a request if we consider that:
- it is vexatious (designed to cause disruption or annoyance rather than having a serious purpose)
 - to comply would exceed the statutory cost limit (£450 with staff time charged at £25 an hour which is the statutory rate). If we believe it will exceed the cost limit we will issue a refusal notice and invite the applicant, if possible, to revise the request to make it less expensive
 - it falls within an exemption under the legislation

5. Charging

- 5.1 If a charge is going to be made for photocopying and disbursements, a fee notice will be sent detailing the costs. The requestor has three months in which to pay and once payment has been received, the 20 working day period becomes effective

A charge will be made for the photocopying of information requested as follows:
20p per single A4 size

- 5.2 If the Town Council does not receive the fee within three months, we are not obliged to comply with the request. However, the Town Council may consider whether it can release any information without charge.

6. Clarification

- 6.1 The Town Council can seek clarification about what is being requested. The time limit for responding stops whilst we wait for a response to our request for clarification.

7. Exemptions

- 7.1 The most common exemptions are:
- Section 21 – information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. There is a duty to confirm or deny whether we hold it and to tell the requestor where they can find it. This is an absolute exemption which means the public interest test does not need to be applied, (see below).
 - Section 22 – information intended for future publication. This means it is in draft, still being worked on but when completed, or approved, it will be published. The public interest test must be applied here.
 - Section 31 – prejudicial to law enforcement (preventing crime, collecting tax)
 - Section 36 – prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.
 - Section 40 – personal data
 - Section 42 – legal professional privilege
 - Section 43 – commercial sensitivity

- 7.2 All except section 21 are qualified exemptions requiring the application of the public interest test. This means weighing up whether the public interest is best served by disclosing the information, or not disclosing it.

8. General Requests for Information

- 8.1 The Town Council will continue to deal with routine requests for information as it does currently. Routine information which is freely available to members of the public is that listed in the Town Council's Publication Scheme on the website.
- 8.2 Any requests for information that is not contained in the Publication Scheme on the website will be passed to the Town Clerk to deal with under the FOI Act. A certain amount of guidance on dealing with requests is held by the Town Clerk, but it may be necessary that further specific guidance will be required from the Information Commissioner's office. If a member of staff is unsure as to whether a request for information is routine or not, they will refer to the Town Clerk. The use of personal information is covered by the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 8.3 The Town Clerk will act as the Freedom of Information Officer and has a responsibility to ensure that data subjects have appropriate access, upon written requests, to details regarding personal information relating to them.
- 8.4 The applicant will be kept informed at all stages of the process of supplying the information requested, particularly if it is a complex request, when guidance may have to be sought from other agencies.

9. Environmental Information Requests 2004 (EIR)

- 9.1 Environmental Information broadly relates to:
- Air, atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape, plants, animals, biological diversity and genetically modified organisms
 - Emissions, discharges, noise, energy, radiation, waste, recycling, and pollution
 - Measures and activities such as policies, plans and agreements
 - Reports, cost benefit analysis and economic analysis
 - The state of human health and safety, contamination of the food chain
 - Cultural sites and built structures (the effect of the environment on the human world
 - Planning and development, building control, construction and renovation, floods and flooding issues, land use, traffic, parking, location of mobile phone masts and demolition of buildings
- 9.2 It covers documents, photos or maps. There is no distinction between formal approved documents, and anything else. The duty is to make the information available. This is not the same as the duty to disclose under FOI.
- 9.3 There are 20 working days to respond to the request. Unlike FOI there is no extension to the time limit for consideration of the public interest test. A further 20 days is permitted though if the request is complex, or there is a large amount of information involved. There is no right to charge for inspection. Cost recovery is permitted with reasonable charges published in advance.

10. Exceptions EIR

- 10.1 There are exceptions to the requirement to disclose, these exceptions are subject to the public interest test like FOI. The exceptions are:
- personal data
 - information not held when the request was made
 - the request is manifestly unreasonable (similar to “vexatious” under FOI but with “manifestly unreasonable” used instead. The courts have treated both in the same way)
 - the request is too general
 - information is in draft or is unfinished
 - information is an internal communication
 - disclosure would adversely affect the course of justice or commercial confidentiality.
- 10.2 There is a lot of guidance, and case law, on the use of both FOI exemptions and EIR exceptions which can be found on the Information Commissioner’s website at www.ico.org.uk.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 The will act as the Data Protection Officer and is responsible for gathering and disseminating information and issues relating to information security, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other related legislation.

12. Publication Scheme

- 12.1 This is a scheme available via the website, setting out the classes of information that will be made routinely available and any charges. This includes policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information. This information is easily and quickly available.

13. Appeal Process

- 13.1 If unhappy with the way their request has been dealt with an internal review can be requested. This will be carried out within 20 working days of the request for a review being received. If the individual remains unhappy with the result of the review the individual can ask the Information Commissioner to look at their concerns. The Town Council will provide details of the internal review process when it is requested. The process will vary depending on the type of request and who is available to review the process within the timescales.

14. Vexatious Requests

- 14.1 Whilst the Town Council wishes to be open and transparent and to provide as much information as possible about the work it does there are occasions when it might be necessary to decide that a request is “vexatious” within the meaning of the legislation. There have been a number of legal cases which have helped to clarify what is meant, legally, by “vexatious” and which have stated that we have limited resources and that our obligations under the legislation must be proportionate to those resources.

- 14.2 Public authorities do not have to comply with vexatious requests. There is no requirement to carry out a public interest test or to confirm or deny whether the requested information is held.
- 14.3 The key question is whether the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress. There is no exhaustive list of circumstances. Every case is unique and judged within the context and history of that specific situation.
- 14.4 “Vexatious” Indicators
- Abusive or aggressive language
 - Burden on the authority
 - Personal grudges
 - Unreasonable persistence
 - Unfounded accusations
 - Intransigence
 - Frequent/overlapping requests
 - Deliberate intention to cause annoyance
 - Scattergun approach
 - No obvious intent to obtain information
 - Futile request

15. Process the Town Council will follow to determine if a request is vexatious

- 15.1 The Town Clerk deals with all requests for information on behalf of Chipping Norton Town Council. If a request is considered to be potentially vexatious the Clerk will prepare a summary setting out the context and history to the request. This summary will be reviewed by members at Full Council.

16. The Review

- 16.1 The following will be considered:
- The purpose and value of the request
 - Whether the purpose and value justifies the impact on the public authority
 - The context and history so, for example, if there has been a long and frequent series of requests the most recent request, though not obviously vexatious in itself, will contribute to the aggregated burden
 - Have there been numerous follow-up enquiries no matter what is supplied? This will be balanced against how clear our responses have been, has contradictory or inconsistent information been supplied or is a legitimate grievance being pursued?
 - Whether there are alternatives to the vexatious route. If it is too expensive then section 12 (costs in excess of £450) will be used. The Information Commissioner permits the total costs for all requests from one person (or several acting in concert) to be aggregated during a period of sixty days so long as they are requests for similar information
 - Is this a round robin, a “fishing” expedition or part of an orchestrated campaign? None of these make it vexatious but are factors

17. Final Warning

- 17.1 If, having considered all of the above, the Town Council thinks there is a case for treating the request as vexatious then consideration will be given to a “final warning”. This is a letter, or email, to the person making the request explaining the impact the request(s) are having and asking that their behaviour be moderated. This “final” warning will not be appropriate in all cases but, if it is possible that the person making the request has not appreciated the impact of what they are doing, then it may assist.

18. Advice and Assistance

- 18.1 In addition the Town Council may want to ask the person making the request whether advice and assistance would help in clarifying what exactly they wish the organisation to provide. Again this may not be appropriate in every circumstance but will be considered.

19. Report to Members

- 19.1 The history of the matter will go forward as part of a report to Full Council setting out the evidence and reasoning behind the recommendation to propose that the request be treated as vexatious.
- 19.2 The decision to declare a request vexatious will be taken by the Town Council. This decision should be taken within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This time limit should be achievable in normal circumstances, however, if there is no meeting scheduled within that timescale then the decision will be formally delegated by the adoption of this procedure to the Mayor of the Council (in consultation with the Deputy Mayor).
- 19.3 Under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act the refusal notice will set out the Council’s internal review procedure and the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner’s Office. However, under section 17(6) if the Town Council has issued a previous refusal notice for a vexatious request (and it would be unreasonable to provide another one) it is not necessary to do so. This will be done where the complainant has already been warned that further requests on the same, or similar topics, will not receive any response.
- 19.4 Please note that if a request is found to be vexatious and further requests are received on the same topic no response will be provided

20. Responsibilities

- 20.1 The Town Clerk will act as the Freedom of Information Officer and has a responsibility to ensure that data subjects have appropriate access, upon written requests, to detail regarding personal information relating to them.

21. Review

- 21.1 This procedure will be reviewed as necessary when there is a change in the law and in line with the Freedom of Information Policy.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY & STATEMENT OF INTENT

Inform Consult Involve Engagement Action

INTRODUCTION

To achieve its vision for Chipping Norton, the Town Council is committed to working closely with the public. Everyone should be involved in making Chippy the type of community they want it to be, whether they are a resident, a local group or business. Informing, consulting and involving people in the work of the Town Council is key when it comes to decision-making; securing better services; the local democratic process, and creating an empowered and active citizenship.

AIMS

The Town Council strives to:

Inform by providing information about what is happening to help local people – including young people and hard-to-reach groups - understand an issue, service or planned actions, options or solutions. This will be done by:

- Posters, fliers, banners, advertising and publications
- Local newspaper press releases, publications, radio and TV, interviews
- Monthly newsletter, letters, leaflets
- Information stalls, i.e. at Town Council events/open days/exhibitions
- Public and specific meetings, presentations, briefings
- Town Council website detailing all Council services, activities and up to date articles
- Facebook and other social media

Consult by asking for feedback, advice or opinions on a particular issue. This will be done by:

- Questionnaires and surveys, feedback forms
- Online surveys and questionnaires
- Face-to-face interviews/telephone interviews
- Residents', user panels and community groups
- Discussion/focus groups/forums
- Written consultation through letter or email
- Consultation events/workshops/exhibitions/general events/shows



- Online consultation
- Public, neighbourhood or specific meetings or surgeries
- Documents or information available at The Guildhall, The Town Hall, The Chippy Larder and online.

Involve by ensuring that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered, encouraging people to put forward ideas, options, initiatives and actions. This will be done by:

- Public or specific targeted discussion meetings with interested parties
- Public or stakeholder workshops to identify issues and shape options
- Public events, interactive displays
- Community-led plans and working groups
- Comments and complaints
- Councillor Surgeries
- Interaction with Town Councillors and staff, District and County Councillors and other local government-led organisations

All forms of communication will be clear, factual and appropriate; use plain English and, where appropriate, adhere to the Town Council's corporate design and logo.

The Town Council will inform, consult with and involve our partners and stakeholders, and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts, through:

Actively being involved in various community organisations who offer front line services to people the Town Council often find hard to reach, including:

- The Chippy Larder
- The Branch
- Aspire Chipping Norton
- The Chippy Theatre
- Chipping Norton Youth Services
- Citizen's Advice West Oxfordshire
- CNarts
- Sports clubs



The profile of the Town Council will be raised through:

- Inviting residents to be actively involved in our meetings via Public Participation.
- Encouraging residents to link to the Town Council's Facebook page, and other social media feeds
- Widely publicising the Annual Town Meeting
- Encouraging use of the Council's new website
- Issuing press releases covering activities of the Council
- Involving residents in events and activities such as the Town Festival, The Christmas lights event and Remembrance Sunday.
- Production of a monthly newsletter
- Communication and networking with Chippy News

Every Town Councillor will be enabled in maximising their role as elected representatives and community leaders through:

- Receipt of a comprehensive new members information pack and a tailored induction programme.
- Mentoring for new Councillors
- Making copies of agendas and minutes of Council meetings widely available
- Encouraging Councillors to represent the Town Council on community groups and organisations

Every employee will be enabled in understanding the Town Council's priorities through:

- Regular team meetings
- Regular Performance Management Reviews
- Being encouraged to provide input into the decision-making process
- Being encouraged actively to represent the Town Council at community events

ENGAGEMENT

Listed below are the individuals/organisations with whom the Council wishes actively to engage:

- Residents of Chipping Norton
- Businesses and business organisations
- Community, voluntary, special interest and residents' groups
- Older people
- Young people
- Hard-to-reach groups
- Public and private sector stakeholders
- Schools
- Health Agencies (commissioners and providers)
- Visitors



ACTION PLAN

Action Plan item	Task	Responsibility	Status / Frequency
Mayor	The Mayor to fulfil a community leadership role and encourage community organisations to be involved with initiatives.	Mayor/Deputy Mayor	Ongoing
Minutes	Ensure copies of Minutes are available - hard copy, electronically, and on the Town Council website	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Office Opening Hours	Publicise office opening hours in newsletter and on website and notice boards	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Annual Town Meeting	Publicise the meeting and liaise with stakeholders to encourage good attendance	Councillors Town Clerk	Annually
Public Forum	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest or concern via public participation element of all Full Council and Committee meetings	Staff and Town Councillors	Ongoing
Notice boards	Regularly update notice boards with Town Council and community activities	Deputy Clerk	Ongoing
Website	Maintain website with information on Town Council services and activities	Clerk's Office	Ongoing
Newsletter	Produce a regular newsletter	Clerk's Office in consultation with Mayor and Deputy Mayor	Monthly
Businesses	Engage with businesses and business organisations.	Designated Town Councillors	Ongoing
Local Democracy	Encourage residents to both vote at and stand for the Town Council in Local Council elections	Clerk's Office and Town Councillors	Ongoing but higher priority in six months leading to local elections
Press	Liaise regularly with the press sending details of Council meetings and	Clerk's Office	Ongoing



Liaison Meetings	Meet with Cabinet member for Stronger, Healthier Communities at WODC	Clerk	Quarterly
Social Media	Use Facebook and other social media to promote Town Council meetings, activities and events	Deputy Clerk	Ongoing
Councillor Surgeries	Encourage residents to visit Cllr surgeries	Town, District and County Councillors	Last Saturday of the month
Consultations	20mph speed limit for town's	OCC and Clerk's Office	Launch consultation in July 22
Build Chippy Better Working Group	Encourage residents to take part	Deputy Clerk and designated Town Cllrs	Fortnightly

DRAFT