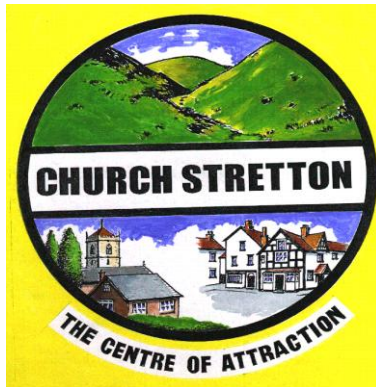


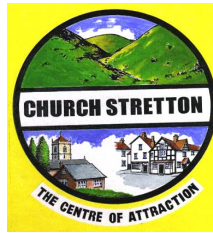
Church Stretton Town Council

Policies



**Reviewed and amended by AF&GP
Committee 15th July 2014 and ratified by
Council 29th July 2014**

CHURCH STRETTON TOWN COUNCIL



POLICIES

INDEX

SECTION 1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Complaints Procedure
2. Town Mayor & Use of Mayoral chain
3. Collective Responsibility Procedure
4. Responses to the Press & Use of Council Stationery
5. Delegation of Powers to the Town Clerk **incl** Declarations of Pecuniary interests
6. Meeting cycle & Public Participation
7. Council Minutes
8. Street Furniture/Signs Policy/Livery Colours/Memorial Seats & Erection of Memorials in Greenhills & Cunnery Road cemeteries
9. Advertising Policy
10. Training Policy

SECTION 2 FINANCE

1. **Accounts & Financial Regulations :**
2. **Finance Management Strategy**
3. **Grant Procedures**
 - a) Allocation of Grants/Donations/Subscriptions
 - b) Procedures for applications to the Town Council for a grant
 - c) Procedure for entering into joint venture with another organisation re obtaining a grant
4. **Members Allowance**

SECTION 3 PLANNING

1. **Planning Policy**
2. **Procedural Policy in Relation with Dealing with Future Developments in Church Stretton**

SECTION 4 PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES

(note most policies relating to Personnel are included in the Employee Handbook)

1. **Resource Management Policy Document**
2. **Equal Opportunities Policy Statement**
3. **Whistle Blowing Policy**
4. **Rebanding policy**

SECTION 5 CHARITIES/PREMISES/LAND

1. **Policy Governing the Hire of Council Premises and Land**
2. **Procedures for the meetings of the Trustees of the SHI/Brooksbury & Sandford Avenue Park Charities**
3. **Silvester Horne Institute:**
 - a) Daily Rate
 - b) One Day Sales
 - c) Inventory
 - d) Administration on-costs
 - e) Advance Bond
 - f) Borrowing Equipment
4. **Policy regarding usage of lawned area for Croquet/Tennis at Church Stretton Park plus general protocol policies for all clubs using the Park.**

5. **Purchasing plots in Greenhills cemetery & exhumation charges**

Held in separate folders:

STANDING ORDERS

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2002

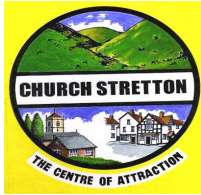
RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & TERMS OF REFERENCE

ASSET REGISTER

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



Church Stretton Town Council

60 High Street
Church Stretton
Shropshire SY6 6BY

Email: townclerk@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk

OUR MISSION: Church Stretton Town Council seeks to provide excellent services at best value

- to meet the needs and improve the well-being of all the residents of the town*
- to conserve and enhance the amenity and environment of the town in respect of its buildings and landscape*
- to ensure a sustainable and vibrant community for the continuing benefit of residents, visitors and businesses.”*

1.1 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This complaints procedure is intended to ensure that complaints by members of the public about the Council's actions, or lack of action, or standard of service are dealt with promptly and effectively. The object of the procedure is to put things right when they have gone wrong and ensure that mistakes do not recur in the future.

2. This procedure does not apply to:

- complaints about the substance of policy decisions made by the Council (although members of the public may make comments or ask questions during the public participation session during every Council meeting);
- complaints about the conduct of an individual councillor, which should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Shropshire Council
- complaints by an employee of the Council about the Council's actions as an employer, which should be dealt with under the Council's grievance procedure.

3. Complaints about the Council's administration and procedures should be made initially to the Town Clerk, and will be dealt with initially by the Town Clerk. If the complainant is unwilling to approach the Town Clerk a complaint may be made to the Chairman of the Council, who will refer the complaint either to the Town Clerk or to the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Complaints may be made in writing, by email, by phone or in person.

4. Complaints which cannot be dealt with immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.

5. Complaints should be dealt with promptly. In general complaints will be dealt with within 20 working days of receipt, although this time limit may be extended with the agreement of the complainant, or where the Town Clerk feels it necessary to take legal or other advice.

6. Where it appears that the complaint includes an allegation that a criminal offence has been committed the Town Clerk may deal with the complaint by referring it to the police.

7. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the Town Clerk's decision on a complaint, or if the complaint is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant within the time limit set out in the previous paragraph, the complainant may ask for the matter to be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

8. Where a complaint is referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee the complainant will be informed of the date, time and place of the meeting. At least ten working days' notice will be given. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and also to submit any documents which s/he wishes to refer to. Any such documents must be received by the Town Clerk seven working days before the meeting to enable them to be circulated to members. The Town Clerk will provide the complainant with any documents that s/he wishes to refer to the same timescale. The Town Clerk will also inform the complainant whether it is likely that the meeting will be open to the press and public or whether the press and public are likely to be excluded (for example because the personal affairs of an individual may be discussed).

9. At the Committee meeting the Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure. The complainant may outline the grounds of complaint and may then be questioned, first by the Town Clerk and then by Committee members. The Town Clerk may outline the Council's position and may be questioned, first by the complainant and then by Committee members. The Town Clerk and then the complainant may give a final summary of their position.

10. The complainant and the Town Clerk will then leave the room to allow the Committee to reach a decision on the complaint. They will be called back when the Committee has reached a decision.

11. If the Committee considers that a complaint alleges misconduct by an employee the decision on the complaint may be deferred until the allegation has been dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

12. Committee decisions on a complaint should normally be announced in public. The complainant should be notified of the decision in writing within seven working days, and notified also of what action will be taken.

13. Where a complaint is upheld the Town Clerk should report to a subsequent meeting of the Committee and of full Council what action has been taken to ensure that any mistake does not recur.

Adopted Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)
Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.2 Town Mayor

Agreed by Council 8/11/04 Min No: 04-116

With immediate effect and henceforth, the Chairman and Vice-chairman of Church Stretton Town Council shall be known respectively by the style and title of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor of Church Stretton and that the Mayor's spouse or other chosen person shall be designated Mayoress or Mayor's consort.

The following was agreed by the Town Council on ***26th July 2011 (Min No:11.51)***

RESOLVED (11 in favour 1 abstention) to adopt the following policy for the roles of Town Mayor/Chairman and Deputy Town Mayor/Vice-Chairman as follows:

- 1. The role of Mayor/Chairman shall remain as one**
- 2. The role of Deputy Mayor/Chairman shall remain as one**
- 3. The maximum term of office for a Mayor/Chairman shall be three years.**
- 4. The position of Mayor/Chairman will continue to be elected by members annually.**
- 5. Following a maximum term of office, a Councillor may not be elected Mayor/Chairman again until a period of three years has elapsed.**
- 6. An out-going Mayor/Chairman may, however, be immediately elected Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair**
- 7. There shall be no maximum term of office for Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair**
- 8. The position of Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chairman will continue to be elected by members annually.**
- 9. In the event that no Councillor is prepared to stand as Mayor and Chairman, then the Deputy will fulfil the role, and if neither role can be filled, then a Chairman will be elected for each Council Meeting for the purposes of that meeting alone.**
- 10. the foregoing shall be implemented as from the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2012**

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

Guidance notes on Protocol for wearing Mayoral Chain

Wearing chain of office outside the Parish:

A civic leader should not wear his robe or chain outside the parish boundary unless invited to do so by the mayor/chairman of the other authority. If visiting outside the parish and wishing to wear the chain, the correct procedure is to first obtain permission from the leader of the Parish to be visited.

Dress:

The mayoral chain should never be worn with the uniform of the Armed Services but may be worn with the uniform of the Lieutenancy of the County or clerical dress.

When wearing the chain of office, dress should be of a standard in keeping with the position of Mayor

Civic occasions:

The chain must be worn for the annual meeting of the council and Remembrance Sunday (or any other Civic Service) to symbolise for all to see our proud heritage and tradition of democratic government.

Other occasions:

The mayoral chain may only be worn at events to which the Mayor has been invited as a representative of the Council and attendance at the event has been sanctioned by the Council.

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.3 Collective Responsibility Procedure

Adopted by Council 22/10/07 Minute No: 07.96b

The following procedure is designed to assist Councillors in formulating project ideas

The procedure is aimed at protecting the reputation and integrity of both Councillor and Council whilst not impeding imaginative/innovative ideas aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of the Parish in accordance with the Town Council's Mission Statement.

Proposed Collective Responsibility Procedure:

1. Embryonic ideas should be put to the appropriate Committee via the Town Clerk. It is advisable to always run such ideas past the Town Clerk initially as there may be some background knowledge/history which could be helpful in the formulation of a proposal.
2. Initial exploratory enquiries to outside bodies regarding an embryonic idea may be carried out by a Councillor **ONLY** if it is made **absolutely** clear that it is an individual enquiry and **NOT** an official Town Council approach.
3. When a proposal is put to the appropriate committee, it will then decide how the matter should be furthered by either:
 - (a) authorising the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Councillor to work up a firm proposal for referral back to the Committee (i.e. issuing a mandate)
 - (b) if it is felt that a proposed scheme so warrants it, to refer it to the Town Council for sanction to proceed.
4. Unless a Councillor is issued with such a mandate, he/she must not claim to represent the thinking and intentions of the Town Council. In addition, the Town Council's Press Policy must be adhered to at all times.
5. When given a specific mandate, this must not be exceeded. If in doubt the advice of the Town Clerk should be sought.
6. It is essential that **all** communications with other agencies are channelled through the Town Clerk.

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.4 Policy re. Responses to the Press & use of Council Stationery

Responses to the Press:

Adopted 15th January 2007 Min No: 06.117b)

“Responses to the press relating to matters discussed by the Town Council shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Town Clerk. The Town Mayor is also authorised to give the views of the Council to the press on any non-confidential subject discussed by Council. Whenever possible any information given to the press shall be given in writing so as not to leave interpretation open to misunderstanding and misreporting. At no time shall the personal views of either members or officers of the Council be given to the press in a way which could be interpreted as a view of the Council as a whole.”

Council Letterheads

Agreed by council 16th May 2005 Min:05-17)

“To retain the current letterhead but to use the green livery version for special occasions”

Use of Council Stationery and Communications

(agreed by Council minute 95-117)

In order to ensure the correct procedures are carried out and to avoid confusion and conflict, the following policy was adopted:

1. All correspondence in pursuance of the Council's official business whether from full Council or the Committees, is sent by the Town Clerk (as Proper Officer) on official Council headed paper.
2. any correspondence sent from a Councillor should not be on Council headed paper and must be clear it is from an individual Councillor and must not give the impression it is from the Town Council.
4. no correspondence should be sent from any ad-hoc committees with out first being ratified by the Council, after which they can be sent by the Town Clerk on Council headed paper.

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

All under 1.4 Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

All under 1.4 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.5 Delegation of Powers to the Town Clerk (Proper Officer) and Responsible Financial Officer

Normal duties of the Town Clerk are detailed in the job specification and include:

The day-to-day running of the SHI, taking of bookings and collecting the monies thereof; administering interments and purchases of graves at the Greenhills Cemetery and interments at the Cunnery Road Cemetery and collecting monies thereof; administering the Park, Playing fields and Market and collecting monies thereof; keeping a record of these actions and where appropriate, delegating these duties to other members of staff..

In addition powers are delegated to the Town Clerk and are included in the Council's Standing Orders as detailed under Standing Orders 3, & 24 plus the 2014 Financial Regulations

Normal Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) are detailed in the job specification. Powers delegated to the RFO and are included in the Council's Standing Orders as detailed under Standing Orders 11, & 28 plus the 2014 Financial Regulations

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)
Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

Declarations of Pecuniary interests:

1. A dispensation be granted to all Town Councillors who are ratepayers in Church Stretton Civil Parish so have a Disposable Pecuniary Interest in the setting of the Council's Budget and Precept.
2. A dispensation be granted to all twin-hatted Town Councillors to allow any discussions to take place regarding relations between the Town Council and Shropshire Council.
3. The Town Clerk be granted the power to approve all future dispensations, in accordance with the power resting with the relevant authority under Section 33(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the basis is set out under Section 33(2) and under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agreed by Council 11/12/12 Minute 12.105d
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)
Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.6 Meeting Cycle & Public Participation

AGREED by Council 14th May 2014 Minute 13.08

“the Council amalgamates the Amenities and Finance & General Purposes Committee to form one committee, named ‘Amenities, Finance & General Purposes Committee’ (with 7 members) for a trial period of 1 year and accepts the meeting dates schedule for 2013/14 as presented, with the Town Clerk charged with writing the Terms of Reference for the new Committee.”

AGREED by Council 8th April 2014

to set up a Planning Committee; accept the draft Terms of Reference (with the addition of terms covering pre-application meetings and follow-up actions); the Committee to be nominated at the May Annual Meeting, and to start a trial 6 month period, commencing in June 2014 (review December 2014)

Agreed by Council 96-25 (May 1996)

Upon discretion of Chairman and Clerk, meeting start time can be varied depending on the volume of work to complete. Also, upon the discretion of the chairman, the implementation of Standing Orders may need to be more strictly applied.

All reports should be circulated with the Agenda to avoid having to read them out during a meeting and to allow councillors time to digest the contents.

Public Participation

(As per Standing Order 1 – Agreed 29th March 2011 Min NO: 11.57a))

- a Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public’s exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public’s exclusion.
- b Subject to standing order 1(c), members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
- c The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing order 1(d) shall not exceed (15) minutes in total
- d Subject to standing order 1(e), each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than (3) minutes.
- e In accordance with standing order 1(d), a question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate.
- f In accordance with standing order 1(g), the Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.

- g. A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of that meeting.

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374:

All under 1.6 Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

All under 1.6 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.7 COUNCIL MINUTES:

Agreed by Council 08/09/03 – Min 03-79

In addition to providing a synopsis for Focus and occasional articles on specific subjects, the Chairman and the Town Clerk are authorised to give occasional updates on Town Council achievements

Agreed by Council 20/10/03 – Min 03-94

In relation to supplying council minutes to Stretton Focus, it is the policy of this Council that:

1. Omit matters of parochial interest to the council.
2. Normally omit the numbers voting for or against a proposition
3. Omit names of councillors.
4. Include all matters relating to planning applications as these appear to be of general interest, albeit abbreviating detail.
5. Add a brief explanation in parenthesis of an item if needed.

Adopt a more journalistic style although without ‘spin’!

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.8 Street Furniture/Livery Colours/Signs & Memorials

Street Furniture Policy

(agreed by Council minute 03-23a on 19th May 2003)

To create a vision of an established town image, the Town Council will promote conformity, colour, design, quality and appearance of town signs, and will seek to ensure that all bollards, posts, boxes and bins are also of a uniform colour and design that reflects good taste and sensitivity within the Conservation Area of the Town and beyond.

Encouragement will be given to the use of the Town Council's livery colours of green and gold.

May 2012 Minute 12.12(i) Colours amended to : Dulux Trade Weathershield Exterior Gloss "British Racing Green" and gold and when re-painting seats, signs, bollards etc. takes place this colour scheme is used..

Signs Policy

(agreed by Council minute 03-159a) on 16th February 2004)

Any hirers of Council facilities will be informed that if they wish to place signs advertising their event around the town the following criteria will apply:

1. signs must be of an approved colour and size (to a design supplied by the Council) and be reasonably professional
2. the signs may only be erected the week of the event and taken down immediately the event has taken place.
3. the signs may only be erected at certain approved sites (*details to be agreed*)

Memorial Seats

(Agreed –PG.149 & 02-1-6b) (28.10.02 & 18.11.02)

"In future any memorial seat donated by a member of the public, or organisation, will only be accepted if the seat is made of metal (pattern/design to be approved by P & G Committee) OR Recycled Enviropol (in black) and that the person/organisation donating the seat remains solely responsible for its maintenance and repair."

Erection of Memorials in Greenhills and Cunnery Road Cemeteries, Church Stretton

(Agreed by Council 20/7/98 – Min 98-54 & amended F&GP.146, OAC.199a & F&GP.155.4 (11/12/06; 22/01/07 & 05/02/07))

1. Fees are now payable for the erection of a memorial on a grave and for additional inscriptions on existing memorial and for a replacement headstone.

See current scale of fees and charges for details.

2. Only simple headstones and vases are permitted
3. Small photographs may be inserted into the headstones.

All under 1.8 Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

All under 1.8 Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

All under 1.8 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

1.9 Advertising Specifications Policy **(for advertising on Town Council property)**

The Town Council will accept occasional advertisements for specific locations on property owned by the Town Council provided they meet with the following criteria:

1. the size of the advert shall not exceed A3
2. the colours used in the advert shall not be too garish and shall fit in with the ethos of the AONB & Conservation area of the town. Where possible the town's livery colours of British Racing Green (amended by Council minute 12.21i on 15th May 2012) and Gold should be used.
3. the content of the advert shall refer only to local activities
4. the Town Council has the right to vet all proposed adverts and reserve the right to refuse any advert should the content be considered to be offensive in any way. No advert shall be permitted if it is considered to be political, racist, sexist etc
5. the fee for displaying an advert shall be £3 for one week or £1 per week for 2 weeks up to a maximum of 8 weeks. All fees shall be paid in advance and are non-refundable. All fees are subject to the standard rate VAT.
6. any loss or damaged advert shall be replaced by the customer at their own expense. A damaged advert shall be removed by the Town Council if it is considered to be unsightly.
7. The final decision on whether or not to accept an advert shall remain with the Town Council.
8. Locations: rear of car park notices in the Square; Easthope Road toilets; notice boards at Burway Road, Little Stretton.

Requests to display permanent advertisements will be considered on a case by case basis and may be subject to planning permission.

Adopted by EDC 19th March 2012 Min No: EDC.148b)
Council 3rd April 2012 Min No: 11.154b)
Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)
Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

POLICY RE ADVERTISING BANNERS

1. Banners may only be erected on the section of railings north of the main gates of the Park (adjoining A49)
2. Banners may only be erected at the discretion of the Town Clerk
3. Banners must be no larger than 920mm x 3650mm and professionally made
4. Banners advertising commercial events will not be permitted
5. There will be a charge of £5 per week for a maximum of three weeks (proceeds to go to the Sandford Avenue Recreation Park Charity)
6. Only one banner at any one time will be permitted.

Adopted by Economic Development Committee 25/09/12 minute EDC.170
And ratified by Town Council 23/10/12 minute 12.89)
Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)
Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

CHURCH STRETTON TOWN COUNCIL

1.10 TRAINING POLICY

Church Stretton Town Council recognises that in order to provide the best possible services to the people of its area, its Councillors, Town Clerk and staff must be trained to ensure they possess the knowledge and skills to carry out the work of the Council.

Training is based on the principles of the National Training Strategy for Parish and Town Councils (2001) and includes both Councillors, the Town Clerk and staff. It recognises that strong, effective councils rely on well trained members and staff, supported by an effective structure of local training partnerships.

All Councillors, the Town Clerk and staff will be given and encouraged to take opportunities to receive appropriate training for their roles. To support this, the Council will allocate funds to a training budget to enable training and attendance at conferences.

The Council will be assisted by the Town Clerk in identifying training needs, research appropriate courses and other training opportunities and arrange participation. Councillors, the Town Clerk and staff will be committed to relevant training and feed back to the rest of the members the learning gained. The Council's Finance & General Purposes Committee will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of training.

The Council will pay the annual subscriptions for the Town Clerk to be a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), which is the main provider of training and advice for Town Clerks.

The Council will review, on an annual basis, its membership of the Shropshire & National Associations of Local Councils, both of which are training providers for councillors and clerks.

The person who holds the post of Town Clerk will be expected to work towards gaining the appropriate qualifications relevant at the time to enable the role of Town Clerk to be carried out in a competent manner.

Whilst it is recognised that Councillors may find it difficult to attend day-time courses the Council has an expectation that members will attend relevant courses. In addition the Council will consider local training for the Council as a whole so that all members can attend.

New Councillors will be provided with an Induction Package and short briefing by the Town Clerk to ensure that they are able to take a full and active part as soon as possible. If appropriate the Council will provide a mentoring scheme for new councillors.

CMH

July 2012

Approved Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

2.1 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - 2014 Regulations

<p style="text-align: center;">CHURCH STRETTON TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2014</p>
--

INDEX

1.	GENERAL	17
2.	ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL).....	19
3.	ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING	20
4.	BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND	21
5.	BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS	22
6.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS	23
7.	PAYMENT OF SALARIES	25
8.	LOANS AND INVESTMENTS	26
9.	INCOME	26
10.	ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES	27
11.	CONTRACTS	28
12.	PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS.....	29
13.	STORES AND EQUIPMENT.....	29
14.	ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES.....	30
15.	INSURANCE	30
16.	CHARITIES	31
17.	RISK MANAGEMENT	31
18.	SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS	31

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 29th July 2014

1. GENERAL

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

¹ Model standing orders for councils are available in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils

- maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations².
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);
 - approving accounting statements;
 - approving an annual governance statement;
 - borrowing;

² In England - Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011/817
In Wales - Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005/368

- writing off bad debts;
 - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,
- shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under annual review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

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

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

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. At the end of each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be called upon by the RFO to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council or Finance Committee.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to

the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - report to council in writing, or in person, annually;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. Each standing committee shall review its forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the council not later than the end of December each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than October prepare the “first look” at detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Finance committee. This will be amended as necessary and considered again by that committee in November and submitted to the council in December.
- 3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council’s forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.4. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

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

- the council for all items over £5,000;
- a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £3,000; or
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items between £1,500 and £3,000
- The Clerk for any items up to £1,500

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

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

4.2 Scheme for budgetary virements:

- RFO authorised to vire up to £2,000 within a service sector
- Committee authorised to vire up to £5,000 between the services for which that committee is responsible.
- Council to authorise any virement above £5,000 or between committees

4.3 During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.4 Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year and will be vired into general balances.

4.5 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually after staff appraisals have taken place and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.6 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1,500. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 4.7 No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.8 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.9 The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £1,000 or 15% of the budget.
- 4.10 Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be reviewed annually for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2 The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, together with the relevant invoices and cheques which shall be signed by the RFO and two authorised signatories. The payment schedule shall be presented to the next council meeting and shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.3 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.4 The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, as soon as practicable.
- 5.5 The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and does not have authority under clauses 4.1 to 4.10 of these regulations, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council;
 - b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council; or

- c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £20,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

5.6 For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like) for which council, or a duly authorised committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

5.7 A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8 In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.

5.9 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.10 Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

6.1 The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2 Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council

6.4 Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee. Cheques shall be signed by any three of the six signatories authorised by the Town Council. One of those signatories shall, in normal circumstances, be the RFO. In the absence of the RFO, if a cheque is required as a matter of urgency, the invoice shall be authorised by the Clerk and signed by three authorised signatories. Such invoices will be ratified by the RFO upon return to duty.

If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.

6.5 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the invoice.

- 6.6 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable Direct Debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.7 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally Salaries) may be made by Banker's Standing Order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a Banker's Standing Order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.8 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.9 If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.10 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.11 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.12 The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.13 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.14 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.15 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by the Clerk, the RFO and a member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.16 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

- 6.17 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 6.18 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. **Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.**
- 6.19 The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £200 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
 - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council.
- 7.4 Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

7.5 The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

7.6 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

7.7 Before employing interim staff the council must consider a full business case.

8 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

8.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval, and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full council.

8.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

8.3 The council will arrange with the council's Banks and Investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the council at the same time as one is issued to the RFO.

8.4 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.

8.5 The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

8.6 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

8.7 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

8.8 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9 INCOME

9.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.

9.3 The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a joint report of the Clerk and RFO

- 9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9** Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash. *(See Council Policy 2.2 Financial Management)*
- 9.10** Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below)].

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3 All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11 (I) below.
- 10.4 A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

11 CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding [£60,000] in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
- c. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- d. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- e. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- f. If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.

- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 28,³ and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £500 the Clerk shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.
 - i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
 - j. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.
- k. The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 including thresholds shall be followed.

12 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

³ Based on NALC's model standing order 18d in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils

14 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The Clerk shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £500.
- 14.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5 Subject only to the limit set in Reg. 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 14.6 The Clerk shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15 INSURANCE

- 15.1 Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 15.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16 CHARITIES

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

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

18 SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

Approved by AF&GP on 15th July 2014

Final ratification by the Town Council on 29th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

2.2 Financial Management Strategy

Risk Assessment to safeguard monies handled by the Council Cash deposits (e.g. park takings etc.)

Mainly handled by three members of staff:

Park takings:

- 1st counts money upon receipt
- 2nd collates money with schedules
- 3rd banks money and enters amount into accounts
- (tasks 1 & 2 may be carried out by the same person)

Photocopying or any other misc. cash sales (e.g. prints)

- 1st charges customer and issues receipt
- 2nd banks money and enters amount into accounts

Market Money and any other cash paid for services:

- 1st raises invoice and collects money, issues receipt
- 2nd collates receipt with invoice, banks money and enters amount into accounts

Cheque deposits

- 1st stamps receipt, collates with invoice and issues receipt
- 2nd enters amount into accounts and banks

Accounts paid

- RFO collates invoices received with orders made/checks accuracy/authorization etc.
- 2nd enters amount onto accounting system and raises cheque
- RFO signs cheque and then passes cheque and invoice to two Councillors (of the 5 authorised to sign) for signature
- All payments listed in minutes.

Petty cash

- Any member of staff/councillor wishing to use petty cash must firstly seek authorisation from RFO and furnish RFO with a receipt for any money paid out.
- This is then entered into the Petty Cash book and reconciled on a regularly basis.
- (The reconciliation to be done on a rota basis between 1st, 2nd, 3rd member of staff)
- Cheques are raised on this account to keep the balance of Petty Cash at £200

Adoption recommended by F&GP Committee 2nd October 2006 (F&GP.140.3)

Adopted by Council 16th October 2006 (06.82b)

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & Approved by AF&GP on 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

2.3 Grant Procedures

2.3.a) Allocation of Grants/Donations/Subscriptions

(agreed March 1992)

Priorities for grants, donations and subscriptions to be as follows:

1. Charities, organisations and societies which, in providing assistance, facilities or services, will directly benefit the residents within the Parish.
2. Charities, organisations and societies whose objectives are related to county, District (or wider) interests and will be of indirect benefit to residents within the Parish, but which may also be to the benefit of visitors to the town and its immediate area.
3. National or Regional appeals for financial assistance by organisations whose objectives are related to the relief of suffering or distress.

Budget limits:

- a) each year the Town Council will budget 1% of its annual expenditure estimates to provide for grants, donations and subscriptions. (with the exception of subscriptions to SALC and the SS AREA TPC, which are "professional fees" and accounted for under the heading "Administration")
- b) the Town Council will only respond to appeals, which must reach the Council Office by 1st November annually in order to be considered for the following financial year's budget, and although the 1% amount would be the maximum for awards, any balance would be carried over to the next financial year with a corresponding decrease in the 1% allocation.
- c) no award will normally exceed 45% of the budget allocation. Any requests exceeding this will be considered individually.
- d) the F&GP Committee looks at all requests initially, making a recommendation to the full Council.

2.3.b) Procedures for applications to the Town Council for a grant

Procedure approved by: Church Stretton Town Council., Minute No: 07.83b

Date: 11th September 2007

Introduction.

This procedure sets out the philosophy to be adopted in relation to all grants made by the Church Stretton Town Council in excess of £100.00.

Grants below £100.00 will follow the normal council authorisation procedures as outlined by the Town Clerk to those requesting donations.

Grants in Excess of £100.00.

Any grant which exceeds £100.00 will be subject to the following requirements:

- A grant request shall be made (see attached) which will set out the proposed extent of grant and clearly establish how the grant is to be utilised. It will include the necessary cost breakdown to enable council officials to evaluate the acceptability of the request.
- Applicants should clearly understand that should the request be approved they will be required to provide the necessary invoices and sales receipts when and if they are incurred.
- Following approval of the grant the Council requires that, where sales invoices and receipts form part of the request, these be presented as soon as possible after expenditure. These receipts will normally be expected to be presented within 8 weeks of payment by the Council of the grant. The Town Clerk will monitor this matter and has authority to extend the period to match the applicant's situation.

Grants approved initially by the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be submitted for general approval at the next appropriate Town Council meeting.

2.3.c) Procedure for entering into joint venture with another organisation re obtaining a grant

Adopted by Town Council 16th October 2006 (Min No: 06.82b)

In order for the Town Council to enter into a joint venture with another organisation re. obtaining a grant for a particular project, the following criteria must be met and the prescribed procedures followed:

1. All elements of the grant applied for must be properly costed as accurately as possible
2. All original receipts must be forwarded to the RFO
3. The RFO will check these against the grant allocation
4. Once the RFO is satisfied that the receipts match the allocation, a cheque will be drawn
5. Any discrepancy between the grant allocation and submitted receipt must be justified, in writing, by the organisation
6. Any organisation entering into an arrangement with the Town Council must sign a copy of these regulations to confirm that they agree to comply with them

All under 2.3 Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

All under 2.3 Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

All under 2.3 Reviewed & Approved by AF&GP on 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

2.4 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

AGREED by Council 15/12/03 Min 03.131

This Council wishes to pay Travel & Subsistence Allowance to its members when the need arises (should the member so wish) at the rate recommended by the National Joint Council, when one of the following journeys is undertaken:

1. attendance at a meeting of the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committees, or any other outside body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations;
2. attendance at any Parish & Town Council Association meetings if the Council is a member of the organisation;
3. attendance at any formal opening of tender documents;
4. performance of any duty which requires the Council to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
5. any other duty approved by the Council in connection with the discharge of any of its functions.

Addition to this Policy – AGREED by F&GP Committee on 20/07/06 (F&GP.134.5(i)) and ratified by full council on 24th July 2006 (06.52d)

“ that apart from the Mayoral Allowance, there is no need for other allowances except for out of pocket expenses such as travelling, paper etc.

It was also **AGREED** that there is a need to make it clear to Councillors that they are able, and are encouraged, to put in claims for legitimate out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Council.”

Members are also permitted to claim for one ink cartridge and ne ream of paper per year.

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed & Approved by AF&GP on 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

3.1 PLANNING POLICY

Planning Process.

The statutory period for most planning applications is 8 weeks which may be extended to 13 weeks for major projects. Within the period no time frame has been established by SC in relation to enabling CSTC to evaluate applications, although planning officers are required to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Town Clerk.

CSTC considers that a period of no fewer than 10 days from receipt to return is necessary for proper evaluation of all planning applications.

Pre-application discussions

In addition to the protocol set out in CSTC Policy 3.2, the Planning Committee may, from time to time, undertake pre-application discussions with planning officers and/or applicants in order to ascertain relevant information pertaining to a forthcoming application. At no time during these discussions should any opinion be voiced so as to avoid any accusation of predetermination.

Planning Application Review.

All planning applications, either full, outline or reserve, received from SC will be processed in accordance with Standing Order 3xiv & xv and 21 of CSTC's Standing Orders. The applications should be returned, completed, to the Town Clerk within 6 working days.

Copies of all applications received will be sent, as and when they are received to every member of the Town Council's Planning Committee. The Chairman & Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee will nominate which member(s) will be delegated to evaluate the application within the above timescale. A rota system of the Councillors serving on the Planning Committee may be employed to carry out the evaluation of applications if deemed by the Chairman & Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee to be appropriate. Wherever possible, at least one of the delegated Councillors should be Ward Councillor for the ward to which the application applies. Any Councillor with a perceived interest in approval of the application will be expected to decline the evaluation. It is advisable that family members are not involved together in evaluation of any planning application.

A minimum of two Councillors should evaluate an application and view the site of the application

Any application which is deemed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee to be of great significance shall be referred to the whole Council for evaluation – with comments being relayed back to the Planning Committee for collation and formulation of a response to SC.

Specific matters which should be evaluated by appointed Councillors during their reviewing process include:

- The Town Design Statement & Shop Front Design Guide
- Impact on the local utility infrastructure
- Impact on the economy and environment
- The Planning Notice is in a prominent position local to the property
- Whether to property is in the Conservation Area

At the discretion of the reviewing Councillors they should approach whoever they feel necessary to clarify the planning implications whilst avoiding confrontation. Moreover, Councillors must, at all times avoid direct confrontation on a specific planning matter they are dealing with, by individuals or groups, at the project site or any other location. Any issues raised by these individuals or groups must be directed to the Town Clerk who will suggest the appropriate Shropshire Council officer for them to approach.

In addition, during the evaluation period at no time should Councillors take a view, either verbally or in writing, in relation to the application to the applicant or interested local persons. Also, at no time in the process should Councillors evaluating an application, suggest alternatives or improvements to the project. At all times a non-committal approach to all parties to the application is recommended.

In the event of members of the Planning Committee not being available to carry out the evaluation, the administration function at the Town Council Office will allocate the application to another Councillor on an "as available" basis. This evaluation will be sent immediately (electronically) to the Planning Committee for signing off.

A consensus opinion on approval or otherwise will be expected and the Town Council's cover sheet duly signed and dated by each reviewing Councillor, with the consensus opinion clearly indicated. The various categories for cover sheet comment are:

- No Objection
- No Objection with comments
- Objection with reasons
- No Recommendation (with or without comments)

Councillors are able to provide additional written comment on the cover sheet or as a separate document. These comments will only be included in the representation sent to SC if they are the consensus opinion of the reviewing Councillors or approved at a Planning Committee meeting. If approved, they will be appended to the pro forma when it is returned to SC for their information.

Applications for tree work, whether the subject of Tree Preservation Orders or within the Conservation Areas in the Town, are also copied to the local Tree Warden(s) by SC. The local tree wardens' opinion should be sought by Councillors evaluating "tree work" applications and that person's opinion taken into account in the evaluation process. Where Councillors feel unable to make decision in relation to tree work the local tree warden and the SC tree experts opinion will be assumed to be the preferred solution. To facilitate this consultation, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee shall allocate each tree application to a Councillor and a Tree Warden to evaluate. The Councillor and Tree Warden will ensure that the applicant understands that their role in the process is purely as local representatives, and if they have any comments or concerns about the work being requested, they will make clear that any suggestions made or apparent 'advice' given is not official and is being made purely on an advisory basis. It is established Council policy to ask that the opinion of the SC tree expert is sought on applications relating to trees and vigorous action is needed to request that the SC Tree Officer looks at tree applications which the Planning Committee considers to be significant. It will also, as a matter of course, be recommended that where trees are removed, as part of the normal planning process, that support planting takes place in the next planting season.

Church Stretton residents are given the opportunity within the planning process to make their views known in relation to planning applications. This is covered by SC best practice documents and this aspect is not assumed to form part of this policy.

Following Application Evaluation.

All applications and recommendations will be immediately circulated electronically to all members of the Planning Committee and will form part of the minutes of the next following Planning Committee meeting. These minutes will be presented to the next full Council meeting for information only.

A local Council Member is able to speak on behalf of our Council for 3 minutes at the SC Area Planning Committee meeting on matters relating to a specific planning application and is also invited to attend any site inspection which may take place prior to the SC Area Planning Committee meeting. At this site visit the Council Member may not address SC Area Planning Committee members directly but is able to make relevant comment through the SC Area Planning Committee Chairman.

SC has responsibility for notifying the Town Council at least 7 working days in advance of the relevant SC Area Planning Committee meeting date and to invite a Council Member to attend both the meeting and the site visit if relevant. Failure to follow this procedure will be dealt with by direct contact between the Town Clerk and the Head of Planning and Building Control at SC.

The final decision by SC Area Planning Committee relating to all planning applications is reported to the Town Clerk and will be sent electronically to all members of the Planning Committee as and when received and will form part of the minutes of the next following Planning Committee meeting. These minutes will be presented to the next full Council meeting for information only. Under the Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee these decisions shall be reviewed and any decision they feel has not adhered to existing policies and documents shall be challenged.

Post Determination Review

A register of all planning applications is to be maintained that includes the CSTC Evaluation decision, the SC Decision, highlighting those where the decision went against CSTC recommendation, reasons for the disparity when that has been determined, and an Implementation note which identifies completed projects that did not meet CSTC expectations.

It is the responsibility of the Planning Committee to ensure that the register is maintained, and appropriate statistical summaries presented to Council at least annually and to the Annual Meeting.

Policy adopted 27th July 2010
Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Amendment adopted Council meeting 24th July 2012 Min No: 12:52b(ii)
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)

Reviewed by the Planning Committee 15th July 2014
& approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

3.2 Procedural Policy in relation to dealing with future development in the Strettons

Whilst the Town Council is unable to dictate to developers how they handle consultation with the public, it is advantageous for the Town Council to have a procedural policy in place in order to avoid misunderstandings and be more proactive.. However, it must be stressed that this policy is only a guideline for the Town Council, designed to avoid misunderstandings.

Guidelines:

1. seek, through the Town Clerk, early notification from developers of any proposals for development in the Strettons.
2. seek the agreement of the developer that they (the developer) hold a formal public consultation meeting (with possibly an informal drop-in information event preceding it)
3. the developer would then be invited by the Town Council to make a formal presentation of any proposals to a Town Council meeting, prior to a formal planning application being submitted. This meeting would be open to the public to attend in the usual manner and would offer the opportunity for the public to ask questions.

**Adopted by CSTC
22nd October 2007
Min No: 07.96g**

**Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)**

**Reviewed by the Planning Committee 15th July 2014
& approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)**

4.1 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY DOCUMENT

This document establishes the management of all resources for which the Town Council has responsibility. Resources are defined as human, plant, building, equipment or other assets over which the Town Council oversees and which are assumed to be under the direct day to day control of the Town Clerk. It covers all aspects of responsibility over which the Town Council has control.

The Town Council has a duty of care towards its employees and must ensure that its management strategies are clear and unambiguous. S101 of the Local Government Act 1972 clearly states that a council may delegate the power to make decisions and act on behalf of the Council to an officer, a committee, a sub-committee or another Council (***NEVER to an individual councillor***)

In line with this statutory requirement the Town Council holds the necessary policies and procedures for dealing effectively on a day to day basis with routine matters. (***Diagram attached***)

The Town Clerk has the responsibility of monitoring the performance of staff and the overall management of the Town Council's resources and will make regular reports to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Under the present structure it is only in the event of the absence of the Town Clerk that managerial difficulties may arise and where the reporting loop may not be immediately clear. This Policy Document aims to clarify this particular matter:

In the absence of the Town Clerk for any reason, and only where an immediate decision is required relating to the management of Town Council resources or the implementation of a Town Council decision, the senior administrative assistant on duty at that time will consult with the Chairman of the Council. The outcome of that discussion will be later confirmed or otherwise by the Town Clerk. In the unlikely event that the decision does not meet with the approval of the Town Clerk the matter shall be referred in the first instance to the Finance & General Purposes Committee, for consideration and comment, and then submitted to the Town Council for action where necessary.

The Town Council's document "Town Plan - towards 2013" requires a re-modelling of the Town Council's Committee structure. Revised Terms of Reference will be required for the Town Council's Committees in order to properly implement the Town Plan and these will also establish the way in which each Committee will operate directly in relation to the assets that they have responsibility for and under the guidance set out in statute and this main document. The Policy Documents will be submitted by each Committee to the Town Council for review, approval and adoption.

All other Council sub-groups/working parties etc. will be expected to follow the overall tenets set out in this document.

Town Councillors will be reminded of this Policy at the commencement of each Council year.

**Adopted by Council
21st October 2008
Min No: 08.109b)**

**Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b)**

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

4.2 Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

Equal opportunities is about treating people equally and fairly, recognising that we all have different needs, tastes, experiences and cultures. The Council will examine practices, policies and procedures to ensure that this recognition is taken fully on board.

1.0 Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

1.1 Church Stretton Town Council is committed to the promotion of Equal Opportunities in all aspects of its services and believes that it should take positive steps to promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of its services and the employment of employees.

1.2 The Council is aware of the inequalities that exist in society and as a result opposes all forms of discrimination on the grounds of:

Colour	Race
Nationality	Ethnic or national origin
Gender	Marital status
Age	Sexual orientation
Disability	Members of Trade Union
Religious belief	Responsibility for dependants

1.3 The Council will continue to keep under review all its practices and procedures to ensure that no individual or group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly by applying conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

1.4 The Council's policy applies to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, the operation of harassment, grievance, discipline and redundancy procedures and generally to the application of all terms and conditions of employment.

1.5 In addition, it applies to the delivery of services by the Council and in particular it will required its employees to be aware of the different and special needs of particular groups when they are seeking and using the Council's services.

1.6 The Council is committed to ensuring that the policy is effective and will regularly review and examine policies relating to employment and service provision. Monitoring systems will be operated to determine the extent to which the positive promotion of equal opportunities is being achieved.

1.7 The policy seeks to ensure that as an organisation we do not discriminate intentionally or otherwise, against any person on the grounds listed above. Discrimination means treating a person less favourably, without justification, when compared with an appropriate comparator in the organisation, some examples include:

- a person of the opposite gender;
- an unmarried person;
- a person of a different racial or ethnic origin;
- a person who does not have a disability.

OUR COMMITMENT

- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings
- This policy is fully supported by all levels of management from the top and has been agreed with employers (National Association of Local Councils) and employees (Society of Local Council Clerks) representative bodies and trade unions.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

THE LAW

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Council will also embrace the spirit of the Age Discrimination Act due to become law in October 2006.

Adopted by Church Stretton Town Council

26th June 2006
Minute No: 06.39a

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

4.3 WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

What Is Whistleblowing?

A “whistleblower” is someone who discovers something that is wrong and alerts his employer or the relevant authorities to what is going on. The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal by reason of their having “blown the whistle” and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. To be protected by the law, the act of whistleblowing must fall within the legal rules and the whistleblower must reasonably believe that their disclosure of wrongdoing is made in the public interest.

Our Policy

Our business is run in accordance with the law. No employee will suffer a detriment for speaking up if they believe that something is wrong.

If you have information you believe shows any of the following:

- A criminal offence was committed or is being or is likely to be committed
- A person has or is or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred or is or is likely to occur
- The health and safety of any individual has been or is being or is likely to be endangered
- The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the above categories has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Please raise your concerns immediately with the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Town Council

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

However, you will still be protected in law if you disclose the information to the following:

- A legal adviser in the course of getting legal advice
- A Minister of the Crown
- One of the prescribed persons set out in the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 (e.g. disclosure of a danger to health and safety to the Health and Safety Executive; disclosure of fraud to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry; disclosure of breach of tax rules to HM Revenue & Customs).

Disclosure to any other person is not generally protected except in very limited circumstances.

After you have raised a concern, we will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate manner. This will usually involve making internal enquiries but it may become necessary to carry out a full investigation which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. We will endeavour to complete investigations within a reasonable time.

We will keep you informed of progress and let you know when the investigation is completed. We will not be able to inform you of any matters which would infringe any duty of confidentiality owed to others.

If you use this policy to raise a concern which you reasonably believe to be in the public interest, we assure you that you will not suffer any form of retribution or detrimental treatment.

Any employee who criticises, unfairly, bullies or victimises a fellow employee by reason of their whistleblowing will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the conduct.

Church Stretton Town Council
Adopted July 2013
AF&GP.5.2.2
13.54b

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

4.4 Rebanding of Employees in accordance with banding table issued by Shropshire County Pension Fund.

Church Stretton Town Council delegates to the Town Clerk the responsibility of assessing the correct banding of the banding table applicable to each employee who is entered into the Shropshire County Pension Scheme to ensure that employees are contributing the correct amount.

The banding for each employee shall be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk at the beginning of the financial year, or on an occasional basis if remuneration levels are amended.

Adopted 16th July 2013

AF&GP.5.2.2

13.54b

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

5.1 POLICY GOVERNING THE HIRE OF COUNCIL PREMISES AND LAND

Introduction: Church Stretton Town Council owns either directly or through a Charitable Trust, a number of buildings and public spaces, such as Silvester Horne Institute, The Square, The Park and the Brooksbury Recreation Ground (including the Pavilion) in Church Stretton. It is incumbent upon the Council to maximise the income that it derives from these assets for the benefit of local tax-payers. This policy sets out the conditions that apply to the hiring out of Council premises and land. This policy will be made known to all individuals and organisations that apply to hire any of these premises or land.

Eligibility: The premises and land of the Town Council are available to any individual or organisation to hire. The only exception would be on the basis of police advice that such a letting would not be in the public interest because of the threat to public order. The hiring of the premises and/or land is a commercial transaction which in no way implies that the Council is or is not in agreement with the views or actions at any particular event.

Hire of Premises/Land: Council premises and/or land can be hired by written application to the Town Council. This will normally be done at least one month in advance of the date of hire. This condition may be waived in exceptional circumstances. Applicants will be asked to complete and return a Hire of Premises/Land form, giving full details of the responsible person and/or organisation. A named person will be required to confirm that all of the relevant statutory requirements will be met. This will normally include proof of public liability insurance and, where appropriate, a fire risk assessment. Where food is concerned, proof of Food Hygiene regulations being met will also be required.

Alcohol Licence: The Town Council has an annual licence for the sale of alcohol in the Square and in Brooksbury Recreation ground. Anyone wishing to sell alcohol must apply to the Town Council (using the appropriate application form supplied by the TC) at least two weeks in advance of the event. This will then be passed to the Town Council's Premises Supervisor who will sanction the request (or otherwise) Organisers of events, where alcohol is consumed, are required to adhere strictly to the conditions of their licence. The Council reserves the right to undertake spot checks that hirers are in full compliance.

Property Bond: In respect of Brooksbury Recreation Ground, the hirer will be expected to lodge a property bond at least two weeks in advance of any event. This bond will be returned in full, if a joint inspection with the head groundsman confirms that the ground has not been damaged in any appreciable way. No such bond will apply to premises but hires will be expected to meet the cost of repair for any damage for which they are responsible. However, some hirings of the Silvester Horne Institute (such as discos etc.) will require an advanced bond and submission of a list of the names of the responsible persons who will oversee the event.

Cost of Hire: The Council will review its hiring charges on an annual basis on the advice of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. A separate charge will be levied in respect of electricity usage in the Square and Pavilion. The Council reserves the right to vary the charges for particular events e.g. charitable events.

The Town Council reserves the right to refuse any booking request.

ADOPTED BY TOWN COUNCIL 24/06/08

Min No: 08.39a(ii)

Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

5.2 Procedures for the Meetings of the Trustees of the following Charities:

**Silvester Horne Institute
Brooksbury Recreation Ground
Recreation Park, Sandford Avenue**

1. The Trustees shall meet twice per year in June and December
2. The June meeting shall:
 - (1) appoint a Chairman
 - (2) Resolve to entrust the day to day management of the charity's affairs to Church Stretton Town Council, to be carried out in accordance with the Terms of the Trust.
 - (3) To approve the accounts of the Charity for the 12 months to 31st March of that year.
3. The December meeting shall:
 - (1) consider and accept the budget proposal for the Charity for the following financial year
 - (2) resolve to request grant aid from Church Stretton Town Council in order to enable the Charity to meet the requirements of the budget estimates.
4. For 2007 only, to amalgamate the June and December meeting agendas and to hold this meeting in December, prior to the main Council meeting

Adopted by Church Stretton Town Council 22nd October 2007.

**Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374
Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b**

Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

5.3 Silvester Horne Institute:

a) Daily Rate:

(agreed by council - minute 94-161)

Any booking during a period of 24 hours (i.e between midnight and midnight) which is for less than 8 hours duration, be charged at the normal hourly rate for the category in which it falls. Any booking which exceeds 8 hours in duration in the same 24 hour period, be charged for at the Special Daily Rate which is equal to 8 hours of the normal hourly rate for the category in which it falls.

b) One Day Sales

(agreed by Council 15.2.93 - minute 92-286)

1. any request to hold a sale of electrical goods be refused in the interests of public safety and to protect the interests of local businesses.
2. any request for other types of sale shall be considered by the F&GP Committee and after routine enquiries, be judged on merit and either accepted or refused.
3. any booking which is accepted must be paid for two weeks in advance of the date of the sale, by cheque. Failure to do so will result in the booking being cancelled.

c) Inventory

(agreed by Council - minute 94-161)

The annual renewals for the SHI & Office equipment be included in the Council's annual budget, based on a 7 year life and £15,000 total value - giving a split between SHI and Office of £1,700 and £360 for 1995/6 : and that the increase of the budgetary requirement is, if necessary, phased in over a 1, 2 or 3 year period to bring it to the level required.

d) Administration on-costs F87

(Agreed by Council - minute 94-227)

Should there be a need to recover any outstanding debt to the Council, the actual administration costs involved, i.e. administration time, telephone calls and postage, be added to the amount owed.

e) Advance Bond (P18/b)

(Agreed by Council - minute 94-227)

Addition to Conditions of Hiring Form:

"on the discretion of the Clerk a payment of an advance bond to cover possible damage occurring during a booking may be required before a booking is accepted. This will be refunded after the booking has been completed if not required to cover the cost of repair or re-instatement."

SHI contd....

f) Borrowing Equipment

(Agreed – Property Cttee P245e) & Council 01.176b))

It is a Policy of the Council that items of equipment (such as Christmas decorations), but not including the items already recorded on the scale of charges for taking away from the premises, should only be made available for use in the Silvester Horne Institute.

All under 5.3 Reviewed Min No: 10.53a) 17th July 2012 F&GP.374

(Agreed – F&GP Cttee F&GP.393.1c) & Council 12.104d))

1. not to hire out equipment (including overhead projector; I-pod docking station etc.) for use off the premises of the SHI;
2. to make a charge of £5.00 for hiring this equipment for use as part of a booking in the SHI

All 5.3 reviewed AF&GP.05.1 (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b

All under 5.3 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

5.4 Park Protocol Policies

5.4a Policy regarding usage of lawned area for Croquet/Tennis at Church Stretton Park

Croquet Protocol Policy:

In order to avoid any misunderstanding as to the usage of the lawned area this policy sets out the following agreement and protocol for usage:

The aim is to enable all users (Croquet and Tennis); all ground staff, office staff and Councillor to work in harmony.

1. The portable tennis net will be left (erected) at the southern area of the market tennis court, beyond the tennis and croquet baselines next to the boundary fence.
2. During the playing season, the tennis net shall be placed in situ by the ground staff on a Friday lunch-time and left in situ for the weekend, being removed back to beyond the baseline on a Monday morning. Monday to Wednesday during the playing season, if there is no croquet match in play, the tennis net shall be put in situ at 4 p.m. and removed first thing the following morning. If a croquet match is in play, those playing the match will undertake to put the tennis net in situ upon completion of the match.
3. The use of the new lawned area for tennis shall be permitted as and when requested by members of the public (see also 5) with the following exceptions:
 - a) Tuesdays are Croquet Club Days and Croquet Club members shall have exclusive use of both lawns on a Tuesday.
 - b) If a croquet match is being played either in the League or against another club and both lawns are required – **AS LONG AS THE GROUND STAFF HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THIS IN ADVANCE.**
4. The Council Team Leader and the Town Clerk's PA shall regularly check the Croquet Club Website to view bookings to ensure that the court/lawn does not get double booked.
5. At all other times (for "ad-hoc" players)
 - a) Members of the public wishing to play tennis will be offered the hard courts as a first choice.
 - b) when members of the public wish to play tennis on the grass court; should members of the croquet club be playing on the new lawn (without having pre-booked the use of the lawn) they will retire to the old lawn (or cease playing if there is no room on the old lawn) (*see footnote*), whether or not they have commenced playing a match.
 - c) However, if croquet club members have pre-booked the lawn and members of the public wish to play tennis, if there is room to play croquet on the old lawn (*see footnote*), the croquet club members will retire to the old lawn, unless they have already commenced their match.
6. All those using the facility must be aware that it is a public facility and not a private one.
7. Mutual respect must be shown at all times to council staff, club members and members of the public.
8. No instructions relating to maintenance etc. shall be made by any club member to a member of the ground staff – all comments enquiries should be directed through the Town Council Office
9. This policy shall be monitored throughout the 2013 season and reviewed at the end of the 2013 season to evaluate its success.

Footnote: the maximum number of croquet players who can be accommodated on EACH lawn at any one time is a maximum of 4 or a maximum of 8 if doubles are being played.

5.4b Policy regarding usage of Bowling Green at Church Stretton Park

Protocol Policy:

In order to avoid any misunderstanding as to the usage of the bowling green this policy sets out the following agreement and protocol for usage:

The aim is to enable all users (i.e. Members of all Bowling Clubs using the facilities plus members of the public); all ground staff, office staff and Councillors to work in harmony.

1. All those using the facility must be aware that it is a public facility and not a private one.
2. Mutual respect must be shown at all times to council staff, club members and members of the public.
3. No instructions relating to maintenance etc. shall be made by any club member to a member of the ground staff – all comments enquiries should be directed through the Town Council Office
4. The season tickets held by Bowling Club members entitles the member to play on the green at any time during Park open hours, unless
 - a) the grass is being cut or maintained by the groundstaff.
 - b) the green has been booked for exclusive use by either members of the public or one of the bowling clubs.
5. Should a club undertake a match without booking exclusive use of the green, it must be expected that any member of the public wishing to play at the same time is permitted to do so.
6. This policy shall be monitored throughout the 2014 season and reviewed at the end of the 2014 season to evaluate its success.

5.4c Policy regarding usage of Tennis Courts at Church Stretton Park

Protocol Policy:

In order to avoid any misunderstanding as to the usage of the tennis courts this policy sets out the following agreement and protocol for usage:

The aim is to enable all users (i.e. Members of the Tennis Club using the facilities plus members of the public); all ground staff, office staff and Councillors to work in harmony.

1. All those using the facility must be aware that it is a public facility and not a private one.
2. Mutual respect must be shown at all times to council staff, club members and members of the public.
3. No instructions relating to maintenance etc. shall be made by any club member to a member of the ground staff – all comments enquiries should be directed through the Town Council Office
4. The season tickets held by Tennis Club members entitles the member to play on any of the tennis courts at any time during Park open hours, unless
 - a) the grass on the lawned area is being cut or both grassed and hard courts are being maintained by the groundstaff. (see also below joint protocol with Croquet Club)
 - b) the court(s) has been booked for exclusive use by members of the public
5. The Tennis Club has exclusive use of the three hard courts on Club sessions - see attached list.
6. Should the Tennis Club undertake a match with a visiting club at any other time without booking exclusive use of the courts, it must be expected that any member of the public wishing to play at the same time is permitted to do so.

Use of Lawned area (joint protocol with Croquet Club):

7. During the playing season, the tennis net shall be placed in situ by the ground staff on a Friday lunch-time and left in situ for the weekend, being removed back to beyond the baseline on a Monday morning. Monday to Wednesday during the playing season, if there is no croquet match in play, the tennis net shall be put in situ at 4 p.m. and removed first thing the following morning. If a croquet match is in play, those playing the match will undertake to put the tennis net in situ upon completion of the match.
8. Members of the public wishing to play tennis will be offered the hard courts as a first choice.
9. The use of the new lawned area for tennis shall be permitted as and when requested by members of the public with the following exceptions:
 - a. Tuesdays are Croquet Club Days and Croquet Club members shall have exclusive use of both lawns on a Tuesday.
 - b. If a croquet match is being played either in the League or against another club and both lawns are required – AS LONG AS THE GROUND STAFF HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THIS IN ADVANCE.

This policy shall be monitored throughout the 2014 season and reviewed at the end of the 2014 season to evaluate its success.

All under 5.4 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)

5.5 PURCHASING PLOTS IN GREENHILLS CEMETERY

AGREED by F&GP 07/02/12 Minute No. 364.3

Ratified by Council 28/02/12 Min 11.136c

Anyone purchasing a plot for future use shall be surcharged an additional £200 on top of the normal purchase price. Should the plot be used within 12 months of the purchase, £50 of that surcharge will be refunded.

Reviewed AF&GP.05.1 & AF&GP.07.5.1a) (16th July 2013) & ratified Min 13.54b

Exhumation Policy

AGREED by AF&GP 12/11/13 Minute AF&GP.30.5.4

<p>an administration fee of £150 will be imposed for the exhumation of cremated remains and £150 for the exhumation of a body, with the digging fee to be arranged through the local undertaker and charged for separately.</p>

All under 5.5 Reviewed & approved by AF&GP 15th July 2014 & ratified Min 14.52a)