



WYNYARD

PARISH COUNCIL

MEMBERS POLICY HANDBOOK

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, and elected members of the Council, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

THE COUNCIL’S 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. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the council.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole.

Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the Council’s Grievance procedure.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Accessibility Standards and this Website

Accessibility

We are committed to making our site accessible to all.

Accessibility Standards and this Website

We are continuously improving this website to ensure that it meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines issued by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The WAI website content guidelines, published in 2008 by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), are the globally used and accepted standard for website accessibility, by both the corporate and public sector.

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>

This website is being continually developed in order to serve the largest possible audience, using the broadest range of systems and to consider any needs that users with disabilities might have.

Accessibility Help - Change the way this website looks - Using tools on your computer

You can control the look and functionality of this website, depending on your computer settings.

Most computers will have accessibility settings you can change including; the way the screen looks (e.g. changing; fonts, sizes, colours, etc), the way the keyboard or mouse works and possibly speaking and listening to commands as well as a range of other features.

As several organisations have already produced lots of very good content about how to make computers and websites more accessible, we have linked to these sites rather than duplicate their content.

My Web My Way produced by the BBC is a comprehensive site with loads of useful information and a wealth of accessibility links

If you're a regular computer users then in Windows - Click on the 'Start' button, then 'Programs', then 'Accessories', then 'Accessibility'.

Your browser will usually have controls which you can use to enlarge the text on your screen.

To alter the font type, size, colour of text and background

For improved visibility, our website allows you to increase (or decrease) the size of text and alter the choice of font, colour of text and background to suit your preferences. You can do this by selecting the Accessibility Tools icon at the top left of any page.

Hearing Impaired Users

We are currently looking at enabling Screen Readers to read our pages.

Downloadable files

Files have been made available to download in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format). Reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure that digital publications available on our website are as accessible as possible. If you need any document in a different format, please contact us.

Let us know if you have difficulties using this site

If you find anything on the site difficult to use please let us know.

There is advice at 'Contacting Organisations about Inaccessible Websites'.

All constructive feedback regarding the accessibility or usability of this website is welcome and will be carefully considered.

Feedback

If you experience any problems with our pages, please contact us and we will try to provide you with the information you need. Please let us know which page (if possible including the page address/URL) you experienced problems with, and if you have any suggestions for how we could improve this page.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Wynyard Parish Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

For the purposes of this Code, this also includes a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

Member obligations

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.
6. Adherence to the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

Members, and co-opted members of the Parish Council, have a duty to demonstrate their commitment and adherence to the following:

- a) Selflessness - They should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest and should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- b) Integrity – They should not place themselves under any financial (or other obligation) to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties.
- c) Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- d) Accountability - They are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- e) Openness - They should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- f) Honesty-: They have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- g) Leadership - They should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Registration of interests

Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B, via the Clerk.

Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with the Monitoring Officer any interests in Appendices A and B.

A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer, via the Clerk, any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.

A member need only declare the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest

is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

Declaration of interests at meetings

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He/she only has to declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A which is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a sensitive interest which has not already been disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
9. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B, the member shall not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
10. A member only has to declare his/her interest in Appendix B if it is not already entered in his/her register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it or if he/she speaks on the matter. If he/she holds an interest in Appendix B which is a sensitive interest not already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, he/she shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.
11. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than an interest in Appendix A), the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. If it is a 'sensitive interest' the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

Dispensations

12. On a written request made to the Council's Clerk, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

13. Predetermination

- a Predetermination- Under the Code Councillors must not have formed a

preliminary view about how they will vote before they attend the meeting, and/or express that view publicly. This is not to be confused with predisposition where a councillor holds a planning application, for example but has an open mind to the merits of an argument before making the final decision at the council meeting.

- b The courts recognise two types of predetermination – actual and apparent:
 - i. Actual predetermination is when a person has closed their mind to all considerations other than an already held view.
 - ii. Apparent predetermination is where a fair-minded and well-informed observer, looking objectively at all circumstances, considers that there is a real risk that one or more of the decision-makers has refused even to consider a relevant argument or would refuse to consider a new argument.

IF AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST HAS BEEN MADE IN RELATION TO ANY OF THE BELOW STATEMENTS -THE MEMBER SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THE DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING OR VOTE.

Interests defined by regulations made under section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011 and described below.

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners.

Sponsorship

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made to the member during the 12-month period ending on the latest date referred to in paragraph 6 above for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, or towards his/her election expenses.

This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts

Any contract made between the member or between his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a body in which such a person is a partner in a firm, a director of an incorporated body or holds the beneficial interest in securities*) and the Council —

- a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- b) which has not been fully discharged.

Land

Any beneficial interest in land held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partner which is within the area of the Council.

'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the member or his/her spouses or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.

Licences

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.

Corporate tenancies

Any tenancy where (to the member's knowledge)—

- a) the landlord is the Council; and
- b) the tenant is a body that the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

Securities

Any beneficial interest held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners in securities* of a body where: -

- a) that body (to the member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and
- b) either: -
 - i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*'Director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

*'Securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Appendix B

IF AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST HAS BEEN MADE IN RELATION TO ANY OF THE BELOW STATEMENTS -THE MEMBER SHOULD NOT VOTE BUT MAY TAKE PART IN THE DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING BUT ONLY IF THE PUBLIC ARE ALSO ALLOWED TO SPEAK.

An interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- i. any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;
- ii. any body: -
 - a) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - b) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the member of the Council is a member or in a position of general control or management;
- iii. any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office.

COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council

Introduction

Wynyard Parish Council takes the views of local people seriously and need to be aware when there is dissatisfaction in the services which the Council delivers. Complaints shall be dealt with by the Complaints Committee which consists of 3 Members as elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council and will be convened as and when necessary.

Where there is an appeal made against the decision of the Complaints Committee a General Appeals Panel will be convened by the Clerk. The Panel will consist of 3 members that are not members of the Complaints Committee.

The outcome of a complaint will assist the Council in reviewing and where necessary changing the way services are delivered.

Definitions

The following list is a guide to the range of complaints which are covered by this Complaints Policy:

- a. Failure to provide a service or to achieve an acceptable standard.
- b. Issues regarding the attitude of staff and or their actions, or lack of actions.
- c. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which Council policy and procedure has been carried out.
- d. Discrimination.

The following are excluded from this Complaints Policy:

- a. A request for service
- b. A request for information or an explanation
- c. An insurance claim against the Council
- d. Criticism of Council policy
- e. A matter which is, or may be, the subject of court or tribunal proceedings

Complaints about individuals are a separate matter and will be dealt with as an employment issue and complaints about a Councillor should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Stockton on Tees Borough Council.

How to make a Complaint

There are three stages to the Council's complaints procedure:

- **Stage One**

Upon receipt of a complaint the council will confirm whether the complaint meets the criteria as listed above for a complaint to be considered.

- **Stage Two**

- a. All complaints should be made using the official form as attached to this document and will be acknowledged by the Parish Clerk within 10 working days of receiving the form.
- b. The Complaints Committee will be convened as soon as practicable to discuss each complaint and will respond within 10 working days of the meeting.
- c. If the decision of the Complaints Committee is not accepted by the complainant an appeal can be made, which will be considered by a General Appeals Panel.

- **Stage Three**

- a. The Parish Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 10 working days of receipt.
- b. The General Appeals Panel will investigate and respond within 10 working days of their meeting.
- c. This will be the final decision and the case will be closed.

Vexatious/Repetitive Complaints

The Council may choose to give a decision on a complaint, without a formal investigation, where it considers the complaint to be deliberately vexatious or repetitive.

WYNYARD PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS AND COMPLAINT FORM

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS
Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone No.
E-mail address

DETAILS OF YOUR COMMENT OR COMPLAINT	
Which service are you contacting us about?	
Which of the criteria as shown is your complaint about?	
a. Failure to provide a service or to achieve an acceptable standard.	
b. Issues regarding the attitude of staff and or their actions, or lack of actions.	
c. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which council policy and procedure has been carried out.	
d. Discrimination.	
Please provide details of your comment or complaint. (If necessary, continue on an additional sheet)	

Signed:..... Date:

Official Use Only:

Date Received

Acknowledged by and date

DONATIONS AND GRANTS POLICY

1 Policy Statement

Wynyard Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life in Wynyard. As such we are committed to supporting and strengthening community groups and organisations that help to make a positive difference to Wynyard and its residents

2 Introduction

Wynyard Parish Council is funded by residents and therefore has only limited funds available to assist community organisations working in Wynyard for the benefit of the community.

The Council's financial support is provided by way of grants and donations which are decided against criteria set by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reserve the right to amend or withdraw the policy at any time.

3 Policy and Procedure

- 3.1 At the discretion of the Council, grants are awarded to community organisations which demonstrate a clear need for financial support and must have a specific benefit to residents of Wynyard and comply with the Council's aims set out below.
- 3.2 The organisation applying for a grant must be 'not for profit' or charitable. Grants cannot be made to individuals.
- 3.3 Grants will not be made retrospectively.
- 3.4 Only one application for a grant will be considered from any one organisation in a financial year (April to March).
- 3.5 Requests for a commitment of funds over a period of years will not usually be approved.
- 3.6 Organisations in receipt of a grant may be required to submit a report outlining how the money has been spent.
- 3.7 The Parish Council must be credited in any publicity arising as a result of the award of a grant.

4 Process

- 4.1 The Grants budget will be set annually as part of the general budget setting process.

4.2 Subject to funds being available, applications will be accepted throughout the year.

4.3 Applicants will be required to complete an application form and return it to the Parish Clerk.

4.4 Applicants will need to:

- provide a copy of their constitution;
- provide details of project or activity;
- provide details of proportion/number of beneficiaries living in the electoral area;
- demonstrate a clear need for funding.
- provide details of the organisation's bank account, which must require two signatures. The signatories should not be related.

4.6 All applicants will be contacted within two weeks of the Council's decision.

5 The Parish Council will not fund the following:

- Organisations that do not provide a service to the community of Wynyard (Stockton).
- Individuals or appeals supporting an individual.
- General appeals.
- Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs.
- Religious groups where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs.
- Arts & sports projects with no community or charitable element.
- Medical research, equipment or treatment.
- Animal welfare.

WYNYARD PARISH COUNCIL - FUNDING APPLICATION

All applications for donations / grants must be made by completing this application form and forwarded to clerk@wynyardparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Parish Council meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except August). Your application must reach the Parish Council at least 10 days before a meeting so it can be included on the agenda for the meeting. Applications received after this time will not be considered until the following month.

Your Organisation	
Name of Organisation	
Contact name & position	
Address	
Telephone	
E mail	
Brief Description of the organisation	

Equal Opportunities: My organisation complies with equal opportunities statutory requirements. Yes / No Wynyard Parish Council operates an equal opportunities policy and as such will only give donations / grants to organisations which comply with statutory requirements and do not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, political belief, class, health, employment status

Your Project	
What would you like to do?	
When will this take place?	

How long will it last?	
Where will this take place?	
Who will be involved?	
What is the total cost?	
How much are you seeking from the Parish Council?	
Are you seeking funds from elsewhere? Please give details.	
Please explain how your project will benefit the local community	

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Does your organisation have:	Yes / No	If yes, please give details
a. Public Liability Insurance?		
b. A Leaders Qualification?		
c. Affiliated to a governing body?		
d. Other relevant insurance?		

Does your project involve work with children under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults? Yes / No

If yes, please answer the following questions

a. Does your group have safeguarding policies and procedures that are appropriate to your organisation's work and the project you are asking us to fund and do you review these regularly?	Yes / No
b. Do all staff and volunteers have a DBS check at least every 3 years	Yes / No
c. Do you carry out rigorous recruitment and selection for staff and volunteers?	Yes / No

Supporting Documents

Please confirm that you have included the following:

Most recent income and expenditure account	Yes / No
Current bank statement,	Yes / No
Constitution or rules of your organisation	Yes / No

I confirm that the information I have given is, to the best of my knowledge, a true and accurate statement.

Name (print)	
Signature	
Position in Organisation	
Date	

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Introduction

- 1 This policy is based on a NALC model policy and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice and takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work.

The policy designed to help Council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their job. Wherever possible, the Council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.

- 2 The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3 This policy confirms:
 - informal coaching and supervision will be considered, where appropriate, to improve conduct and / or attendance
 - the Council will fully investigate the facts of each case
 - the Council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective.
 - employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case
 - employees will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary hearing
 - employees may be accompanied or represented by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official - at any investigatory, disciplinary or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. Employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend.

Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make written submissions

- if the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
- any changes to specified time limits in the Council's procedure must be agreed by the employee and the Council
- information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the Council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision. The appeal decision is final
- if an employee who is already subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure
- disciplinary action taken by the Council can include a written warning, final written warning or dismissal
- this procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this
- except for gross misconduct when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the Council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct
- if an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The Council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it,

- the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the consent of affected parties

Examples of misconduct

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

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

Examples of gross misconduct

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

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

Suspension

6 If allegations of gross misconduct or serious misconduct are made, the council may suspend the employee while further investigations are carried out. Suspension will be on full pay. Suspension does not imply any determination of guilt or innocence, as it is merely a measure to enable further investigation.

- 7 While on suspension, the employee is required to be available during normal hours of work in the event that the council needs to make contact. The employee must not contact or attempt to contact or influence anyone connected with the investigation in any way or to discuss this matter with any other employee or councillor.
- 8 The employee must not attend work. The council will make arrangements for the employee to access any information or documents required to respond to any allegations.

Examples of unsatisfactory work performance

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

The Procedure

- 10 Preliminary enquiries. The council may make preliminary enquiries to establish the basic facts of what has happened in order to understand whether there may be a case to answer under the disciplinary procedure.

If the employee's manager believes there may be a disciplinary case to answer, the council may initiate a more detailed investigation undertaken to establish the facts of a situation or to establish the perspective of others who may have witnessed misconduct.

- 11 Informal Procedures. Where minor concerns about conduct become apparent, it is the manager's responsibility to raise this with the employee and clarify the improvements required. A file note will be made and kept by the manager. The informal discussions are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. If the conduct fails to improve, or if further matters of conduct become apparent, the manager may decide to formalise the discussions and invite the employee to a first stage disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary investigation

- 12 A formal disciplinary investigation may sometimes be required to establish the facts and whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.
- 13 If a formal disciplinary investigation is required, the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Committee will appoint an Investigator who will be responsible for undertaking a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The Investigator will be independent and will normally be a councillor. If the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee considers that there

are no councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council. The Investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Disciplinary and Grievance Committee will inform the Investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should specify:

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

- the employee has no case to answer and there should no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure
 - the matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally or
 - the employee has a case to answer and a formal hearing should be convened under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- 20 The Investigator will submit the report to the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee which will decide whether further action will be taken.
- 21 If the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The disciplinary meeting

- 22 If the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will formally hear the allegations..
- 23 No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall take part in the hearing. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting.

The Committee's letter will confirm the following:

- the names of its Chairman and members
- details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting
- a copy of the information provided to the Committee which may include the investigation report, supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure
- the time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that he /she has sufficient time to prepare for it
- that witnesses may attend on the employee's and the Council's behalf and that both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least two working days before the meeting
- that the employee may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official

The purpose of the disciplinary meeting hearing is for the allegations to be put to the employee and then for the employee to give their perspective. It will be conducted as follows:

- the Chairman will introduce the members of the Committee to the employee and explain the arrangements for the hearing
- the Chairman will set out the allegations and invite the Investigator to present the findings of the investigation report (if there has been a previous investigation)

- the Chairman will invite the employee to present their account
- the employee (or the companion) will set out his/her case and present evidence (including any witnesses and/or witness statements)
- any member of the Committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the Investigator and any witness
- the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up

24 The Chairman will provide the employee with the Committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. The Chairman will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision.

25 The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be further investigated by the sub-committee.

Disciplinary action

26 If the Committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

First written warning

If the employee's conduct has fallen beneath acceptable standards, a first written warning will be issued. A first written warning will set out:

- the reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
- the employee's right of appeal
- that a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Final written warning

If the offence is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve sufficiently during the currency of a prior warning, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- the reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- that further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
- the employee's right of appeal
- that a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for a specified period of time (e.g. 12 months).

Dismissal

The Council may dismiss:

- for gross misconduct
- if there is no improvement within the specified time period, in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning
- if another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force.

- 27 The Council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, he/she will receive a written statement of the reasons for his/her dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of his/her right of appeal. If the Committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action taken as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal

- 28 An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. His/her written notice of appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.
- 29 The grounds for appeal include;
- a failure by the Council to follow its disciplinary policy
 - the Committee's disciplinary decision was not supported by the evidence
 - the disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case
 - new evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting.
- 30 Where possible, the appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Council who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the Investigator.
- 31 The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.
- 32 The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.
- 33 At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:
- introduce the panel members to the employee
 - explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the disciplinary decision

- explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
- 34 The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds for appeal.
 - 35 The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.
 - 36 The appeal panel may decide to uphold the disciplinary decision of the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file.
 - 37 If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved.
 - 38 The appeal panel's decision is final.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Introduction

1. This policy is based on a NALC model policy and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work.

It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.
3. This policy confirms:
 - employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for his /her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case.
 - the Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
 - any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council
 - an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final
 - information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the

- grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
 - if an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure
 - if a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if he/she raised the grievance in good faith
 - the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties
 - Employees can use all stages of the grievance procedure If the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure (paragraph 4) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a councillor. Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. If the complaint about the councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of Stockton on Tees Borough Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure (see paragraph 5)
 - If the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination
 - If an employee considers that the grievance concerns his or her safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with his or her line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take

further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime

Informal grievance procedure

4. The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with his/her manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with his/her manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chairman of the staffing committee or, if appropriate, another member of the staffing committee. If the employee's complaint is about a councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the councillor's consent.

Formal grievance procedure

5. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the staffing committee.
6. The Disciplinary and Grievance Committee will hear the grievance. The committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the committee.

Investigation

7. If the committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, councillors or members of the public).
8. The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the committee.

Notification

9. Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:
 - the names of its Chairman and other members

- the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance
- the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official
- a copy of the Council's grievance policy
- confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting
- confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice
- findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation
- an invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).

The grievance meeting

10. At the grievance meeting:

- the Chairman will introduce the members of the committee to the employee
- the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence
- the Chairman will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action does he/she wants the Council to take
- any member of the committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness
- the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case
- a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the committee.

11. The Chairman will provide the employee with the committee's decision, in writing, usually within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

The appeal

12. If an employee decides that his/her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the committee, he/she may submit a written appeal Disciplinary and Grievance Committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.

13. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:

- a failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy
- the decision was not supported by the evidence
- the action proposed by the committee was inadequate/inappropriate
- new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.

14. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Council who have not previously been involved in the case. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.

15. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she

may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

16. At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:

- introduce the panel members to the employee
- explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee
- explain the action that the appeal panel may take.

17. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.
18. The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
19. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the staffing committee or substitute its own decision.
20. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

TRAINING POLICY

1 Introduction

This document forms the Council's Training Policy.

It sets out:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Resources
- Training Budget
- Review of Policy

2 Commitment to Training

2.1 Wynyard Parish Council (WPC) is committed to maintaining the standards expected of a local council.

2.2 WPC expects both Councillors and the Parish Clerk have the knowledge and information to enable them to carry out their roles efficiently and effectively in order that the Council complies with all legal and statutory requirements, functions to the highest standard.

2.3 This will be achieved by:-

2.4 Encouraging all Councillors to improve their knowledge and understanding of council work through training.

2.5 Expects its Clerk to undertake a programme of continuous professional development in line with the requirements of their role and in order that they keep up with all legislation and have the knowledge to be able to advise Councillors

2.6 WPC commits itself to identifying the training needs of its members and staff on a regular basis and will:-

2.7 Make reasonable financial provision in its budget for training and development each year

2.8 Take advantage of any relevant training provided freely by:-

Cleveland Local Council's Association
County Training Partnership
Society of Local Council Clerks
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

2.10 Prospective Councillors and applicants for the post of Clerk should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations placed upon them contained within.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Wynyard Parish Council is committed to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to residents professionally.

3.2 To that end the Council's intention is that Councillors, Clerk and any other workers of the Council are suitably equipped with the correct knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices.

3.3 The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work.

3.4 It is essential that Councillors and staff are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge of local government and the law relating to parish councils, and to learn new skills to promote partnership working and community engagement in order to become effective Councillors and lead a modern and progressive Parish Council of the future.

3.5 Councillor and staff development should be recognised as an integral part of the Council's business.

3.6 Annually, an allocation will be made in the budget each year as required to enable reasonable training and development and 'Training and Development' will be a Standing Item on each Monthly Meeting Agenda.

4 Training Needs

4.1 Wynyard Parish Council consists of 7 elected Councillors and employs one part-time Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

4.2 Training and development for each of these will be regularly reviewed but will contain as a minimum requirement:-

Councillors:

- a. In-house training
- b. Provision of a Councillor Information Handbook containing copies of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant
- c. Access to relevant courses provided by external bodies such as

Cleveland Local Council's Association
County Training Partnership
Society of Local Council Clerks
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

4.3 Expenses can be claimed for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for Councillors in the County

4.4 Circulation of documentation such as briefings and newsletters/magazines to all Councillors

4.5 New Councillors (Elected, Co-opted and appointed Councillors)

New Councillors will receive the above but also be encouraged to attend:-

- Induction training given by the Clerk
- Appropriate 'New Councillor' training given by CTP
- Any additional training aimed at new Councillors.

4.6 Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The immediate training needs of a new appointment will be identified prior to job advertisement and interview and re-assessed and implemented once the appointment has been made.

a. The Clerk will be required to undertake ILCA (if not already gained) and subsequently CiLCA (if not already gained). Gaining the Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA) within 24 months of appointment (this is a condition of employment)

b Attendance at a 'New Clerk's' training courses or similar

c Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as:-

- I.T, Legal Powers, Finance, Planning etc
- As identified through regular training needs assessments
- Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies eg:-

Cleveland Local Council's Association

County Training Partnership

Society of Local Council Clerks

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

d Subscription to relevant publications and advice services will be paid by WPC

e Provision of the Local Council Administration handbook by Charles Arnold Baker/Paul Clayden and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council

f Arranging mentoring opportunities with suitably qualified Clerks from neighbouring parishes will be encouraged

g Expenses for attending briefings, consultations, training and any other general meetings will be paid by WPC

5 Identifying Training Needs

5.1 To provide appropriate training, development and learning opportunities for all Councillors and staff will be identified through self-assessment, the Council's aims and objectives and changes in legislation

5.2 Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman and Clerk, with opportunities to attend courses being investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of full Council as a standing item on the monthly agenda

5.3 Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for new Clerks, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisals

5.4 The Clerk is expected to keep up to date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required

6 Training Resources

6.1 The Council as a whole is responsible for monitoring and meeting the training needs of clerk and members and managing the budget.

6.2 Training requirements will usually be identified by the Council and Clerk and opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the full council.

6.3 The principles of the National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils is recognised as an excellent strategy for both clerk and councillors.

6.4 The Clerk will be expected to hold or be working towards the Certificate in Local Council Administration (as a minimum) and the Council will provide appropriate training and support to enable this to be achieved.

6.5 The Clerk will be expected to attend all relevant training days whenever possible and other members of staff will be expected to attend training days which are relevant to their office. Time will be allowed and remunerated for attendance at such training. The Council may decide to support the Clerk to undertake further training or education at its discretion.

6.6 New councillors will be expected to attend induction training provided locally by the Clerk and will be provided with an information pack containing the documents as set out in the Induction Training pack.

6.7 New councillors will be encouraged to attend induction and on-going development training provided by the County Training Partnership (CTP).

6.8 Councillors will be encouraged to undertake additional training on the local planning system and this will be provided locally by the CTP.

7 Training Budget

7.1 Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget.

7.2 The Council will pay the annual subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Cleveland Local Council's Association to enable clerk and councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

8. Evaluation and Review of Training

8.1 All training undertaken will be subsequently evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Any additional training needs highlighted as a result will be brought into the training identification process stated in section 4 above.

8.2 Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any quality systems relevant to the Council; new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs and requests from Councillors, the Clerk or volunteers.

8.3 The Clerk will maintain a record of training attended by themselves and Councillors.

TRANSPARENCY CODE

This Code is issued to meet the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability. Transparency gives local people the tools and information they need to hold local public bodies to account.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 does not restrict or inhibit information being published naming councillors, members or senior local authority officers who have taken certain decisions, because of the public interest in the scrutiny of such senior individuals and decision makers.

The Data Protection Act 1998 also does not automatically prohibit information being published naming the suppliers with whom the authority has contracts, including sole traders, because of the public interest in accountability and transparency in the spending of public money. Therefore, Wynyard Parish Council should consider inserting clauses in new contracts allowing for the disclosure of data in compliance with this Code.

Wynyard Parish Council should ensure that they continue to comply with any such provisions, and any subsequent legislation regarding local authority minutes, notices and agendas. Where information would otherwise fall within one of the exemptions from disclosure then it is at the discretion of the smaller authority whether or not to rely on that exemption or publish the data.

Information which should be published

Wynyard Parish Council should publish:

- All items of expenditure above £100,
- Cumulative expenditure reaching £1,000 for an individual provider made up of numerous payments,
- End of year accounts,
- Annual governance statement,
- Internal audit report,
- List of councillor or member responsibilities,
- The details of public land and building assets,
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings (which should be published no more than 4 weeks after the meeting).

Information to be published annually

The data and information in this Part must be published:

Annually and not later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates.

This is particularly important to enable local Government electors, council tax payers and ratepayers to scrutinise financial information so that they are able to exercise their rights to question and make objections to the auditor.

All items of expenditure above £100

- Wynyard Parish Council should publish the details of each individual item of expenditure above £100.
- Publishing a complete list of expenditure transactions will also meet this requirement.
- Expenditure information should be published for each individual spending transaction above £100 rather than each item bought.

For each individual item of expenditure above £100 the following information must be published:

- date the expenditure was incurred,
- summary of the purpose of the expenditure, amount, and Value Added Tax that can be recovered.

Copies of all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other related documents do not need to be published, but should remain available for inspection during the specified inspection period set out under regulation 14 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, or under any equivalent regulations made under section 32 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The right to inspect can be exercised on giving reasonable notice.

End of year accounts

Wynyard Parish Council should publish their statement of accounts according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement. The statement of accounts must be approved and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman of the meeting approving the statement of accounts.

The statement of accounts should be accompanied by:

- a copy of the bank reconciliation for the relevant financial year,
- an explanation of any significant variances (e.g. more than 10-15 percent, in line with proper practices) in the statement of accounts for the relevant year and previous year, and
- an explanation of any differences between 'balances carried forward' and 'total cash and short term investments', if applicable.

Annual governance statement

Wynyard Parish Council should publish their annual governance statement according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement.

The annual governance statement should be signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

Where the governance statement contains any negative responses, these should be explained fully, including how any weaknesses will be addressed.

When publishing this information Wynyard Parish Council should consider whether the Data Protection Act 1998 imposes any restrictions or constraints on such publication and whether any of the information would fall within an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and therefore could, or should, be withheld from publication.

Internal audit report

Wynyard Parish Council should publish their annual internal audit report according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement. The internal audit report should be signed by the person who carried out the internal audit.

List of councillor or member responsibilities

Wynyard Parish Council should publish a list of councillor or member responsibilities. The list should include the following information:

- names of all councillors or members of the authority,
- committee or board membership and function (if Chairman or Vice-Chairman) of each councillor or member, and
- representation on external local public bodies (if nominated to represent the authority or board) of each councillor or member.

Details of public land and building assets

Parish councils should publish details of all public land and building assets. Where this information is included in the authority's asset and liabilities register, this register may be published in its entirety or as an edited version displaying only public land and building assets.

When publishing the required data, parish councils should publish the following information in relation to each land and building asset:

- description (what it is, including size/acreage),
- location (address or description of location),
- owner/custodian, e.g. the authority or board manages the land or asset on behalf of a local charity,
- date of acquisition (if known),

- cost of acquisition (or proxy value), and present use.

Information to be published more frequently than annually

Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings. Wynyard Parish Council should publish the minutes from all formal meetings (i.e. full council, committee and sub-committee meetings) not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. These minutes should be signed either at the meeting they were taken or at the next meeting.

Wynyard Parish Council should also publish meeting agendas, which are as full and informative as possible, and associated meeting papers not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate is taking place.

WYNYARD PARISH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Background

1.1 Wynyard Parish Council delivers services which can bring members of staff, Councillors, volunteers, and other organisations into contact with children or vulnerable adults. This could be either as the main part of their role or indirectly when engaged in activities, working outdoors in a public place or seeing residents in the Parish Council office.

1.2 This policy is based on our responsibilities under the Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11, which places a duty on key people and public bodies, including councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

1.3 With regard to safeguarding vulnerable adults, this policy has been developed in accordance with guidelines produced by the Department of Health's 'No Secrets' guidance and The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

2. Definitions

2.1 A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

2.2 A vulnerable adult is someone who, by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, is unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

2.3 An adult for the purposes of this policy is anyone over 18 years of age.

3. Purpose of this Policy

3.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All those who have direct or indirect contact with children or vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. Government guidance makes it clear that this is a shared responsibility and depends upon effective joint working between organisations and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

3.2 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and how this will be implemented by Wynyard Parish Council in the discharge of its duties; and
- Provide staff, Councillors and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

3.3 This policy applies to all members of staff, Councillors, and all those organisations who have a working relationship with the Parish Council, including volunteers.

4. Policy Objectives

4.1 The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that, where possible, all facilities and activities offered by the Parish Council are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable adults;

- To promote the general welfare, health and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and responding appropriately as a local government organisation;
- To maintain procedures in recording and responding to accidents, complaints, and alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect;
- As the Parish Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children or vulnerable adults, it expects all children and vulnerable adults using its facilities to do so with the consent, and if necessary, supervision, of a parent, carer or other responsible adult.

5. Promoting a Safe Environment

5.1 In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, Wynyard Parish Council aims to promote a safeguarding culture in its premises and activity areas. This will be achieved by requiring that all activities involving children either have a parent or guardian present, or that a relevant consent form is completed by a parent or guardian. A minimum of one Parish Council staff member or councillor will be present at all times with another adult.

5.2 The Parish Clerk is the Safeguarding Officer for the Parish Council.

5.3 The role of the Safeguarding Officer is:

- To ensure that, before any Parish Council organised event involving children or vulnerable persons, the appointed Safeguarding Officer briefs all appropriate participants;
- To ensure that Councillors and volunteers are aware of the potential risks they may face in certain circumstances while carrying out their duties;
- To ensure that any volunteers recruited to work with children and vulnerable adults are interviewed and two written references are obtained;
- Decisions on whether any person should be DBS checked will be made by the Parish Clerk after considering whether the reason relates to "regulated activity" involving children or vulnerable adults as defined by law. The cost of any DBS checks will be covered by the Parish Council.

5.4 All members of staff, Councillors and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this Safeguarding Policy and are expected to adhere to the following recommended behaviour:

- A minimum of two adults to be present when supervising children;
- Not to play physical contact games;
- Adults to wear appropriate clothing at all times;
- Ensure that accidents are recorded in the accident book;
- Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.

5.5 If there is an incident or disclosure indicating that there may be a child or vulnerable adult safeguarding issue, it will be recorded in an incident book and reported to the Safeguarding Officer, who will be responsible for ensuring the matter is reported to the safeguarding body at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

5.6 In the event of a contractor, working directly for the Parish Council, being deemed to be working in any area where children or vulnerable adults may be

at risk, that contractor will be required to provide their own Safeguarding Policy.