



HALE PARISH COUNCIL
OF THE HALTON BOROUGH IN
THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE



DATED THIS ELEVENTH DAY OF JUNE 2024
MEMBERS OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL ARE HEREBY SUMMONED
TO ATTEND THE ORDINARY MEETING OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL
ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JUNE 2024 AT 8.00PM
IN HALE VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, HALE L24 4AE
TO TRANSACT BUSINESS AS SHOWN IN THE AGENDA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Hargreaves'.

Mr. Brian Hargreaves
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Note to Councillors:

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Clerk of your apologies.

Please email: clerk@haleparishcouncil.gov.uk or call 07803611222

Note to Public

Members of the public wishing to address the Council should note that they must advise the Clerk before 10am on the day of the meeting both of their wish to participate in the public forum and their topic. If residents fail to inform the clerk prior to the meeting, permission to speak at the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairman. All participants are restricted to a maximum of three minutes. If the public wish to ask the Council questions, please note that the Council may not be able to answer the question if the Council has not considered or resolved the question on an agenda item at a prior meeting. Should this be the case, the Council will advise correspondence with the Clerk to request the item should be discussed at a future Parish Council meeting. If the question is considered outside the remit of Hale Parish Council, residents will be referred to Halton Borough Council.

** Please note that anybody wishing to comment should raise their hand, wait to be acknowledged and should address the meeting through the Chair.*

MEETING AGENDA

1. **Apologies** - To Receive apologies for absence
2. **Declarations of Interest** - To Receive declarations of Interest
3. **Public Participation** – A period of public participation as set out in the “Note to Public” above.
4. **Minutes** –
 - i. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Hale Parish Council on 20TH May 2024 as a true and accurate record
5. **Accounts** - To receive the reconciled bank statement and summary of receipts & payments 15th May 2024 – 7th June 2024 and to accept them as a true and accurate record and comparison against budget (See Attached)
6. **Internal Auditors Report** – To receive & consider the Internal auditors report (period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024) for approval.
7. **Annual Governance Statement** - To agree & sign the AGAR Governance statement for Hale Parish Council April 1st 2023 – 31st March 2024
8. **Accounting Statement** - To agree & sign the AGAR Accounting statement for Hale Parish Council April 1st 2023 – 31st March 2024
9. **Policies** - To review /amend current versions of the following Parish Council Policy documents for approval :-
 - i. **Combined Equality & Diversity Policy**
 - ii. **Data Protection Policy**
 - iii. **Document Retention & Disposal Policy**
 - iv. **Expenses Policy**
 - v. **Information Security Policy**
 - vi. **Model Publication Scheme Policy**
 - vii. **Safeguarding Young & Vulnerable People Policy**
 - viii. **Volunteer Policy**
10. **Volunteer week 2024** – To consider the received invitations to a celebration of National Volunteers Day received by members and officers of Hale Parish Council. To invite the Chair of the Friends of Hale Village and a representative of Halton Borough Council to outline this event for “Volunteers Past or Present”
11. **Date of Next Meeting** – 15th July 2024 at 8.00pm



HALE PARISH COUNCIL

OF THE HALTON BOROUGH IN THE COUNTY OF CHESHIRE



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HALE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT HALE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 20th MAY 2024 AT 8.00pm

Present: Cllr Healey, Cllr Trevaskis, Cllr Williams, Cllr Roberts,
Cllr McNamara, Cllr Wright, Cllr Anderson

In attendance: The Clerk, and two member of public were also present

1. **Election of Chair** – Cllr Roberts was nominated and seconded to remain in position as Chair of Hale Parish Council for 2024 – 2025

Proposed by Cllr Trevaskis and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved Unanimously

2. **Election of deputy Chair** – Cllr Williams was nominated & seconded to remain in position as deputy Chair of Hale Parish Council for 2024 – 2025

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Trevaskis

The Motion was approved Unanimously

3. **Apologies** - An apology was received from Cllr Lewis. No apologies were received from Cllrs Cleary or Brown
4. **Declarations of Interest** – The Clerk declared an Interest in Item 18 (ii) a planning matter which was submitted by a family member.
5. **Public Participation** – The chair allowed members of the Public to address the meeting

A local resident expressed her opinion regarding the problem of dog fouling within the Village which was discussed at a previous meeting. She noted that she felt the Newsletter recently published has made a difference and that the situation has improved substantially on local roads although the park remains a serious issue.

Another resident highlighted the fact that she has seen an increase in the number of used bags of dog waste being discarded irresponsibly and not being placed in designated waste bins

Cllr McNamara gave a summary of his latest meeting with Liverpool John Lennon Airport stating that they are happy with the current positive outlook moving forwards. Jet 2 have now commissioned three of the expected five aircraft to be based permanently at Liverpool and are very pleased with the initial response by users.

The airport monitoring board reported that a majority of 70% of aircrafts land using the airspace above Hale. A further 30% take off over the village which proves to be

noisier but is determined by wind direction. The majority of all flights will take off between 6.30am and 11.30pm. There are a couple of hundred flights per year which land after midnight but they do not generally take off again until the more acceptable window described above.

The monitoring board informed the meeting that there was no information to compare historical complaints from 2022 but that there had been 52 complaints regarding aircraft noise in 2023 which were made by 3 separate individuals. By comparison there were 17 complaints about noise from the county of Cheshire.

One of the local residents asked whether there was any discussion regarding parking in and around the airport. Cllr Wright informed the meeting that it was recognised that Ryanair and Easyjet received preferential landing charges and that the airport surprisingly makes more profit from the parking associated with airport use than through the business activity with these two aircraft companies.

The airport has expressed an expectation that the airport throughput will reach 6 million users in the next year. To date it has provided an additional 200 jobs with the addition of Jet 2 but it was noted that the Liverpool City Council are not very supportive of the needs of Hale Village.

Cllr Trevaskis enquired whether any information regarding the installation of the solar farm on Hale Road was available. He expressed a view that the airport has a history of land grabbing and gave the example of the old Dunlops land which was gifted to the airport by Liverpool City Council for airport support buildings only to be sold at a later date to Barrett homes for housing.

The Chair thanked Cllr McNamara for attending the relevant meetings and for the valuable feedback provided.

6. **Minutes.** –

- i. The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 15th April 2024 were recorded as a true and accurate account

Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Wright

The Motion was approved Unanimously

7. **Payments & Receipts** – Cllr Wright proposed that all payments and receipts for the period 1st April 2024 and 15th May 2024 are a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Healey

The Motion was approved Unanimously

8. **Sample Invoices** – A selection of Invoices was examined to ensure that no phishing or ghost payments have been made

Voucher	Date	Chq/Rec No.	Description	Supplier	Total	Balance	Cashed date
			STARTING BALANCE			31,927.20	
1	02/04/2024		Precept	Halton Borough C	58,845.50	90,772.70	02/04/2024
1	02/04/2024		Insurance	Hiscox	-284.11	90,488.59	02/04/2024
2	04/04/2024		Village Hall Support	Hale Parish Coun	-31,000.00	59,488.59	04/04/2024
3	08/04/2024		Google Invoice	Google Ireland Ltc	-15.41	59,473.18	08/04/2024
2	17/04/2024		Vat Refund	VAT Refund	1,182.70	60,655.88	17/04/2024
4	23/04/2024		Maintenance	Lucas Electrical	-202.00	60,453.88	23/04/2024
5	25/04/2024		Subscription	Chalc	-570.76	59,883.12	25/04/2024
6	25/04/2024		Clerk Salary	Hale Parish Coun	-1,087.60	58,795.52	25/04/2024
7	25/04/2024		Clerks Expenses	Clerk Expenses	-10.00	58,785.52	25/04/2024
8	25/04/2024		Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary	-315.84	58,469.68	25/04/2024
9	01/05/2024		Insurance	Hiscox	-284.11	58,185.57	01/05/2024
10	03/05/2024		Payroll & Scribe	Scribe (Starboard	-414.72	57,770.85	03/05/2024
11	08/05/2024		Google Invoice	Google Ireland Ltc	-18.00	57,752.85	08/05/2024

Checked and approved by Cllr McNamara

9. **End of Year Accounts** – To receive the reconciled bank statement and summary of receipts & payments for the period April 1st 2023 – 31st March 2024 and to accept them as an accurate record and comparison against budget

Proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved unanimously

10. **Notice of Public Rights to Inspect** – It was agreed that the period for Notice of Public Rights to inspect and publication of unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2024 should run from 1st July 2024 – 9th August 2024

Proposed by Cllr Trevaskis and seconded by Cllr McNamara

The Motion was approved unanimously

11. **Risk Management Scheme & Policy** – The Risk Management Scheme and Policy were approved without amendment

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Trevaskis

The Motion was approved unanimously

12. **Members Code of Conduct** - The Members Code of Conduct was approved without amendment

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Trevaskis

The Motion was approved unanimously

13. **Policies** – The following Policies were renewed without amendment.

- i. Grievance Policy
- ii. Dignity at Work Policy
- iii. Disciplinary Policy

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Trevaskis

The Motion was approved unanimously

The following Policies were deferred for review by a working group possibly consisting of Cllrs Lewis, McNamara, Roberts & Trevaskis

- iv. Standing Orders
- v. Financial Regulations
- vi. Scheme of Delegation
- vii. Social Media Policy
- viii. Complaints Procedure
- ix. Public Complaints Procedure

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr McNamara

The Motion was approved unanimously

14. **Asset Register** – The Asset register was approved as a true and accurate account with a caveat that any updates can be made at a later date pending further scrutiny.

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Williams

The Motion was approved unanimously

15. **Planning** – The Planning applications ref 24/00168/FUL and 24/00162/FUL were discussed by the Council. No issues of concern were raised and it was proposed that the applications proceed without objection from Hale Parish Council

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Healey

The Motion was approved unanimously

- 16. Village Sign on War Memorial** – It was resolved to renew the Village sign which has faded on one side. The Clerk has offered to pay for a new sign and to donate it to the Village. In addition it was agreed to speak to Bill Sergeant from HRBL to enquire about re-painting the inscriptions on the memorial and to get quotations to undertake the work. The Chair would like to encourage a more collaborative relationship with all organisation's in the Village and it was noted that some historical differences exist between the Council and the HRBL. It is hoped that a greater understanding can be achieved.

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Trevaskis

The Motion was approved unanimously

- 17. Carnival** – The email recently received by the Clerk from Paul Wright at Halton Borough Council was discussed by the meeting. It was felt that Mr Wright was defensive and has missed the point of the enquiry submitted by the Clerk and it is felt that a further letter explaining that the concerns of the Parish Council are directly concerns about the Carnival Committee being prevented from charging for admittance into the Park during the Carnival event The Carnival relies on this money to fund an event the following year and there are serious concerns regarding to viability going forwards. It is felt that a serious discussion needs to be held with Halton to find a way forward which is suitable for all parties concerned.

Having spoken with Cllr Wharton The Chair informed the meeting that Mr Wharton feels like he has been singled out for criticism. In attempting to build some bridges with Halton Council it was noted by the meeting that no ward councillors have attended Hale Parish Council meetings since 2018 and that it might be a good area to start. It was also noted that we actually have 3 ward councillor's representing the Village and that Cllr Wright is the only one to attend anything the PC have arranged in attending the Civic Service in 2022.

The Chair said he would contact Cllr Wharton to discuss matters again in the near future

- 18. Clerks Annual Leave** – It was resolved to approve the use of the Clerk's delegated authority to arrange his own leave at a time which is appropriate and which does not impact the business of the Parish Council. Any leave requirements which may coincide with the business of the Parish Council will be subject to the approval of the Parish Council allowing time to make arrangements to postpone or move the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved unanimously

19. Dates of Hale Parish Council Meetings 2024 – 2025

The following dates for Parish Council Meetings were agreed

17th June 2024 - Monday 8pm

15th July 2024 - Monday 8pm

16th September 2024 - Monday 8pm

21st October 2024 - Monday 8pm

18th November 2024 - Monday 8pm

20th January 2025 - Monday 8pm

17th February 2025 - Monday 8pm

17th March 2025 - Monday 8pm

22nd April 2025 – Tuesday 8pm

Proposed by Cllr McNamara and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved unanimously

In accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.”

PART TWO

1. **Pension** - To confirm that Hale Parish Council is committed to becoming a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and that the Role of Clerk and RFO, is entitled to join the contributory pension scheme subject to a contracting out certificate for the purposes of the Pension Scheme Act 1993 and stating that the employment is a contracted-out employment being signed.
 - i. To Confirm that Pension Contributions for the Clerk / RFO will start from 1st April 2024
 - j. To agree the outstanding pension settlement
 - k. To confirm that no retrospective pension liabilities will remain outstanding from prior to the 1st April 2024 starting point.

Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr McNamara

The Motion was approved unanimously

2. **Guildswomen** – Two nominations were considered for the award of Guildswoman. One of whom has already been proposed and duly accepted. The second nominee was considered and accepted to become a Guildswoman.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Anderson

The Motion was approved unanimously

3. **Staffing** – The Clerk will arrange a date for a Staffing committee meeting with the aim of undertaking job appraisals and signing pension opt out forms for all employees. A request for a weekend meeting was made by Cllr Trevaskis and the Clerk will make arrangements to suit

The Chair Closed the Meeting at 9.45pm

Balances are correct as of 08:53 on 11 Jun 2024.

↓ Date	Description	Paid in	Paid out	Balance
07/06/24	Direct Debit (GOOGLE • 82385888GZ0RANARO4 CLOUD EMEA)		-18.00	56,037.54
03/06/24	Direct Debit (HISCOX) • HISCOX PIB 8187826		-284.11	56,055.54
29/05/24	B/P to: • SALARY		-1,087.40	56,339.65
29/05/24	B/P to: • HPC		-10.00	57,427.05
29/05/24	B/P to: HMRC •		-315.80	57,437.05
08/05/24	Direct Debit (GOOGLE • 82385888GXQ4TOZXZE CLOUD EMEA)		-18.00	57,752.85
03/05/24	B/P to: Starboard Systems • SCRIBE SUBS.		-414.72	57,770.85
01/05/24	Direct Debit (HISCOX) • HISCOX PIB 8187826		-284.11	58,185.57
25/04/24	B/P to: HMRC •		-315.84	58,469.68
25/04/24	B/P to: • HPC		-10.00	58,785.52
25/04/24	B/P to: • HPC		-1,087.60	58,795.52
25/04/24	B/P to: Chalc • CHALC SUBS.		-570.76	59,883.12
23/04/24	B/P to: Lucas Electrical • LUCAS ELECTRICAL		-202.00	60,453.88
17/04/24	HMRC VTR • XRV126000102656	1,182.70		60,655.88
08/04/24	Direct Debit (GOOGLE • 82385888G0C7EUNGQS CLOUD EMEA)		-15.41	59,473.18
04/04/24	B/P to: Hale Village Hall • BUDGET TRANSFER		-31,000.00	59,488.59
02/04/24	HALTON BOR COUNCIL • PRECEPT 24/25	58,845.50		90,488.59
02/04/24	Direct Debit (HISCOX) • HISCOX PIB 8187826		-284.11	31,643.09
31/03/24	Service Charge		-18.00	31,927.20

Hale Parish Council

Transactions for Hale Parish Council Unity Bank

Voucher	Date	Chq/Rec No.	Description	Supplier	Total	Balance	Cashed date
STARTING BALANCE						31,927.20	
1	02/04/2024		Precept	Halton Borough C	58,845.50	90,772.70	02/04/2024
1	02/04/2024		Insurance	Hiscox	-284.11	90,488.59	02/04/2024
2	04/04/2024		Village Hall Support	Hale Parish Council	-31,000.00	59,488.59	04/04/2024
3	08/04/2024		Google Invoice	Google Ireland Ltd	-15.41	59,473.18	08/04/2024
2	17/04/2024		Vat Refund	VAT Refund	1,182.70	60,655.88	17/04/2024
4	23/04/2024		Maintenance	Lucas Electrical	-202.00	60,453.88	23/04/2024
5	25/04/2024		Subscription	Chalc	-570.76	59,883.12	25/04/2024
6	25/04/2024		Clerk Salary	Hale Parish Council	-1,087.60	58,795.52	25/04/2024
7	25/04/2024		Clerks Expenses	Clerk Expenses	-10.00	58,785.52	25/04/2024
8	25/04/2024		Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary	-315.84	58,469.68	25/04/2024
9	01/05/2024		Insurance	Hiscox	-284.11	58,185.57	01/05/2024
10	03/05/2024		Payroll & Scribe	Scribe (Starboard	-414.72	57,770.85	03/05/2024
11	08/05/2024		Google Invoice	Google Ireland Ltd	-18.00	57,752.85	08/05/2024
12	29/05/2024		HMRC	Hale PC	-315.80	57,437.05	29/05/2024
13	29/05/2024		Clerk Salary	Hale PC	-1,087.40	56,349.65	29/05/2024
14	29/05/2024		Clerks Expenses	Hale PC	-10.00	56,339.65	29/05/2024
15	03/06/2024		Insurance	Hiscox	-284.11	56,055.54	03/06/2024
16	07/06/2024		Google Invoice	Google Ireland Ltd	-18.00	56,037.54	07/06/2024
CLOSING BALANCE						56,037.54	
					Bank statement should show	£56,037.54	

Summary of Receipts and Payments

All Cost Centres and Codes

Expenditure

Code	Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
		Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
1	Asset Purchase				100.00		100.00	100.00 (100%)
2	Wellbeing Fund				5,000.00		5,000.00	5,000.00 (100%)
3	Guildswomen Working Group				100.00		100.00	100.00 (100%)
4	War Memorial Working Group				1,261.00	202.00	1,059.00	1,059.00 (83%)
5	Civic Service Working Group				500.00		500.00	500.00 (100%)
7	Legal/Consultation Fees				1,500.00		1,500.00	1,500.00 (100%)
8	Grants				250.00		250.00	250.00 (100%)
9	Training				300.00		300.00	300.00 (100%)
10	Insurance				3,175.00	710.28	2,464.72	2,464.72 (77%)
11	Web Site				250.00	51.41	198.59	198.59 (79%)
13	Audit				1,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00 (100%)
14	Subscriptions/Advisory Bodies				2,250.00	570.76	1,679.24	1,679.24 (74%)
15	Staffing Including NI				23,500.00	2,806.64	20,693.36	20,693.36 (88%)
17	Bank Charges/Admin.				150.00		150.00	150.00 (100%)
18	Staff Allowances/Expenses				150.00	20.00	130.00	130.00 (86%)
19	Payroll & Scribe				600.00	345.60	254.40	254.40 (42%)
21	Election Reserve				3,500.00		3,500.00	3,500.00 (100%)
22	Hall Hire (Rent)				500.00		500.00	500.00 (100%)
23	Vat							(N/A)
35	General Reserve				5,000.00		5,000.00	5,000.00 (100%)
37	Newsletters				500.00		500.00	500.00 (100%)
38	Village Hall Support Costs				31,000.00	31,000.00		(0%)
39	HR (Pension/Backpay)				10,481.00		10,481.00	10,481.00 (100%)
SUB TOTAL					91,067.00	35,706.69	55,360.31	55,360.31 (60%)

Income

Code	Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
		Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
24	Precept	58,848.50	58,845.50	-3.00				-3.00 (-0%)
25	Vat Recovered	1,182.70	1,182.70					(0%)
36	Refund							(N/A)
SUB TOTAL		60,031.20	60,028.20	-3.00				-3.00 (0%)

Summary

NET TOTAL	60,031.20	60,028.20	-3.00	91,067.00	35,706.69	55,360.31	55,357.31 (36%)
V.A.T.					211.17		
GROSS TOTAL		60,028.20			35,917.86		

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

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

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

KEY: IA = Internal Audit

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		✓	see IA report
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		except for issue? in IA report
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.		✓	see IA report.
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			N/A no petty cash held
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		subject to issue 8.3 in IA report.
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")		N/A	
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.		✓	see IA report
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		✓	see IA report
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).		✓	

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.		✓	see IA report.

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

11/06/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

JON BUSINESS SERVICES LTD

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

11/06/2024

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

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

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts			<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs			<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments			<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments			<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings			<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The internal audit of Hale Parish Council is carried out by undertaking the following tests as specified in the AGAR Annual Return for Local Councils in England:

- Checking that books of account have been properly kept throughout the year
- Checking a sample of payments to ensure that the Council's financial controls have been met, payments are supported by invoices, expenditure is approved, and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Reviewing the Council's risk assessment and ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to manage all identified risks
- Verifying that the annual precept request is the result of a proper budgetary process; that budget progress has been regularly monitored and that the council's reserves are appropriate
- Checking income records to ensure that the correct price has been charged, income has been received, recorded and promptly banked and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Reviewing petty cash records to ensure payments are supported by receipts, expenditure is approved and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Checking that salaries to employees have been paid in accordance with Council approvals and that PAYE and NI requirements have been properly applied
- Checking the accuracy of the asset and investments registers
- Testing the accuracy and timeliness of periodic and year-end bank account reconciliation(s)
- Review of year-end financial statements
- The authority has complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR.
- The authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights for the prior year AGAR
- The authority published required information on a website up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with relevant legislation.

Conclusion

On the basis of internal audit work carried out, which was limited to the tests above, in our view the council's system of internal controls is **NOT in place**, adequate for the purpose intended and effective, and the recommendations reported in the action plan overleaf need to be implemented. As part of the internal audit work for the next financial year we will follow up all recommendations included in the action plan.

JDH Business Services Limited

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	FOLLOW UP
2023/24 internal audit		
<p>1</p> <p>The council suspended the clerk for a period of the financial year and later reinstated the officer as the reason for suspension was found to be invalid. Reasons have also been provided to us for the suspension not complying with requirements as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discussion of the clerks suspension and the reason(s) for the suspension were not set as an Agenda item and no notice was given to councillors. • The clerk was not notified of the item to be discussed in the meeting where the clerk was suspended so the officer were not given any opportunity to prepare any relevant information. • A motion and a vote to suspend the clerk took place without any prior notification which is contrary to standing orders 9 (b) • The council failed to apply the requirements of its own adopted policies including the Dignity at Work policy and the Disciplinary Policy. 	<p><i>The council must collate all identified non-compliance with laws, proper practices and/or regulations (including Standing Orders) and ensure this is communicated with the submission to external audit as part of the response to the Annual Governance Statement Question 3 below:</i></p> <p><i>'3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. Agreed YES/NO'</i></p> <p><i>The council needs to also consider its responses to other parts of the Annual Governance Statement after review of issues in this report.</i></p> <p><i>The council must comply with its Standing Orders regarding the administration and management of council meetings.</i></p> <p><i>The council must comply with its adopted HR policies and proper practice when managing</i></p>	

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>This suspension caused issues with council payments for a significant period as noted in issue 2. below and we are informed that a further impact of the suspension was that the Village Hall Committee did not pay the salaries of staff employed by the council sole trustee charity for nearly 3 months.</p> <p>We have also received information asserting or indicating where laws, proper practices and/or regulations (including Standing orders) were not followed in the financial year. This information provided covered a number of areas, including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the period without the clerk an attempted transfer of council funds to the sole trustee charity was unable to be processed due to the absence of approval of a second signatory. We are informed the payment amount was not authorised by council and that the second signatory had not been approved by full council. • Potential breaches of personal information. In addition, we have received no evidence that any identified data protection issues were reviewed to consider further action that may be required where any data breach had occurred. 	<p><i>staff issues.</i></p> <p><i>No payments should be made from council funds unless they have been appropriately authorised.</i></p> <p><i>No signatories should be added to the bank account unless full council has authorised the individual to be set up as a council bank account signatory.</i></p> <p><i>The council must ensure that any potential breaches of personal information they identify are fully investigated and appropriate measures taken to mitigate identified breaches and update the internal data breach register and notify the breach to the ICO if considered high risk.</i></p>	
--	---	---	--

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect administration and management of meetings including the personnel committee. 		
2	<p>Due to 1.) above there was no access to the bank account to make payments for most of the period the council were without a clerk so the council were unable to meet liabilities as they fell due for general expenditure and salary payments. The only payments that continued to be made in the period were items such as Direct Debits.</p>	<p><i>For periods when the council is without key staff, contingency arrangements must be in place as part of ongoing risk mitigation to ensure there is authorised access to the bank account to pay liabilities when they fall due.</i></p>	
3	<p>The controls over authorisation or approval of payments vary throughout the financial year. In the November 20th 2023 meeting, the council are asked to authorise payments in advance of payment including for example election costs. In the June 19th, 2023 no payments are referred to at all. Other meetings refer to a time period of payments already made as a true and accurate record, eg February 2024 minutes. Therefore, there is no consistent approach to reviewing payments in the minutes and evidencing payment authorisation that can be agreed to the Financial Regulations requirements as follows:</p> <p>5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices/quotes, and present the schedule to council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the council. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was</p>	<p><i>The council must ensure that the method of authorising payments is consistent and aligns with the requirements of the adopted Financial Regulations.</i></p>	

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>authorised. 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.</p>		
4	<p>The 2024/25 budget setting analysis appears to apply all council reserves plus the precept allowing for a £5,000 contribution to maintain a general reserve. This level of general reserve would be substantially below the minimum level of 25% of precept recommended by sector guidance. This is below 25% of the precept level and sector guidance is that councils should aim for a general reserve level of between 25% and 100% of the precept or net operating expenditure. The Practitioners Guide also notes this recommended level of reserves.</p> <p>A significant reason for the substantial fall in budgeted reserves is due to a £31,000 budgeted payment to the sole trustee charity for 'support costs'.</p>	<p><i>The annual budget to support the precept should take adequate account of reserves, as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The council should review the level of general reserves during the budget setting process with reference to sector guidance to ensure the projected levels are adequate.</i></p>	
5	<p>The charity annual return and accounts to the Charity Commission for year ended 31/03/22 was overdue by 202 days at the time of the internal audit.</p> <p>The charity annual return for year ended 31/03/21 was submitted 267 days late to the Charity Commission.</p>	<p><i>The council as sole trustee must ensure all returns to the Charity Commission are filed within deadlines.</i></p>	
6	<p>The council did not comply with Regulation 15 of</p>	<p><i>The council must comply with the requirements</i></p>	

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights for the 2022/23 accounts. The public notice period for inspecting the accounts was not published on the council website.</p>	<p><i>of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 with respect to the notice for the exercise of public rights.</i></p>	
7	<p>Publication Requirements: The Notice relating to the Conclusion of Audit and Audit Certificate were not published by the deadline of September 30th 2023. Therefore, we have concluded in the AGAR internal audit certificate that the council did not comply with the publication requirements for the 2022/23 AGAR audit as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The completed external audit, notice and certificate had still not been published at the date of the internal audit in May 2024.</p>	<p><i>The council must comply with the publication requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</i></p>	
8	<p>It has been identified that an employee who qualified for membership of the relevant pension scheme had not been incorporated into the scheme.</p>	<p><i>The council should ensure that it complies with pensions legislation.</i></p>	
9	<p>No invoice was provided to support the civic expenses list of refreshments dated in September and October 2023 and totalling £164.54.</p>	<p><i>Invoices or vouchers must be secured and retained for all council expenditure.</i></p>	

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

2022/23 internal audit		See 2023/24 issues
1	<p>Budget issues:</p> <p>The budget setting document does not include the impact of the 2023/24 precept on projected carried forward reserves at the end of that financial year. The 2023/24 precept request was set at £37,000 with a budgeted expenditure of £52,436. If this outturn is delivered then a deficit of £15,436 will occur. Reserves at the end of 2022/23 were £24,325, therefore, this could leave £8,889 of total reserves remaining at the end of 2023/24.</p> <p>This is below 25% of the precept level and sector guidance is that councils should aim for a general reserve level of between 25% and 100% of the precept or net operating expenditure. The Practitioners Guide also notes this recommended level of reserves.</p> <p>The budget setting document we were provided did not identify this information about potential low carried forward reserves for the council. Therefore, we have concluded that the budget set for the 2023/24 financial year does not take into account of ‘an amount that the council estimates will be appropriate to meet future estimated expenditure’ (ie to hold in reserves). This is a requirement of the</p>	<p><i>The annual budget to support the precept should take account of brought forward and carried forward reserves, as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992.</i></p> <p><i>The council should review the level of general reserves during the budget setting process with reference to sector guidance to ensure the projected levels are adequate.</i></p>

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>Local Government Finance Act 1992.</p> <p>The precept budget included in SCRIBE for 2022/23 was £49,000, however, the precept was set at £47,500. The one figure in a parish council budget that is predictable is the precept request to the principal council.</p>	<p><i>The council, must include the correct value of the precept request in the annual SCRIBE budget.</i></p>	
2	<p>The council did not review, update and approve a risk assessment during the financial year.</p>	<p><i>The risk assessment should be reviewed, updated and approved by council each financial year.</i></p>	<p>Implemented</p>
3	<p>Fixed Assets</p> <p>The fixed asset register provided for internal audit contained no total. We cast both the current value (total £959,747) and purchase value column (total £612,970) and neither agreed to the value of £1,023,605 disclosed in the AGAR accounts for 2022/23.</p> <p>Review of the additions for the year indicated that the bench had been included gross of VAT in the asset register.</p>	<p><i>The council need to review the fixed asset register and ensure the correct value is disclosed in the AGAR for 2022/23.</i></p> <p><i>A fixed asset register provided for internal audit must contain the total value of assets.</i></p> <p><i>Assets should be included in the asset register net of VAT as this is reclaimed.</i></p>	<p>Implemented</p>
4	<p>Publication Requirements:</p> <p>The Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Audit Certificate were not published by the deadline of</p>	<p><i>The council must comply with the publication requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</i></p>	<p>Recommendation Outstanding</p>

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>September 30th 2022.</p> <p>Therefore, we have concluded in the AGAR internal audit certificate that the council did not comply with the publication requirements for the 2021/22 AGAR audit as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p>		
5	<p>The council did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights for the 2021/22 accounts as the public notice did not cover the first 10 working days of July 2022.</p>	<p><i>The council must comply with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 with respect to the notice for the exercise of public rights.</i></p>	<p>See 2023/24 issues</p>
6	<p>The council is sole trustee to a charity. However, review of the Charity Commission website identified that the 2021 accounts have not been filed and are significantly overdue, and the Annual Return was filed 76 days after the deadline.</p>	<p><i>The accounts for 2021 need to be produced and filed with the Charity Commission. In future, accounts should be filed within Charity Commission deadlines.</i></p> <p><i>Annual returns to the Charity Commission for the sole trustee charity should be submitted to the Charity Commission within deadlines.</i></p>	<p>See 2023/24 issues</p>
2021/22 internal audit			
1	<p>The analysis of staff costs from SCRIBE, minus the expenses included in the analysis, could not be agreed to the figure for staff costs in the AGAR.</p>	<p><i>The council should review the SCRIBE ledger analysis of staff costs and ensure the correct figure is disclosed the AGAR accounts.</i></p>	<p>Implemented</p>

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

<p>2</p>	<p>The risk assessment does not address the risk of supplier fraud which is a significant risk currently faced by public and independent sector organisations. Supplier fraud risks can be managed via appropriately robust policies and procedures. Examples of prevention actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training for staff to alert them to the potential risks of providing sensitive company information, by phone or other means, especially contract and account information. - establish a rigorous change of supplier details procedure - where a supplier has purported to have changed their bank details always call the supplier to check the veracity of a request, using details in your system, rather than those on any associated letter or email. A person should be authorised to approve a supplier bank account change after having reviewed the process undertaken to verify the supplier details change - periodic review of supplier accounts should also be undertaken to remove any dormant accounts. This reduces the likelihood of any old supplier information being used to secure fraudulent payments. - checking address and financial health details with Companies House - checking samples of online payments to supplier invoices to ensure the payment has been made to the supplier bank account. 	<p><i>Risk assessment should include an assessment of supplier fraud risk including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls, and the implementation of appropriate risk mitigation measures.</i></p>	<p>See 20222/23 issues</p>
----------	--	---	-----------------------------------

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

2020/21 internal audit			
1	The council did not update, review and approve the risk assessment during 2020/21.	<i>The risk assessment should be updated, reviewed and approved by council each financial year.</i>	Implemented
2	The minutes do not clearly evidence that budgetary control reports are provided to the council quarterly for review, as required by the Financial Regulations.	<i>Budget monitoring should occur throughout the financial year and minutes should clearly evidence the review of budgetary control information</i>	Implemented – evidence of budgetary control is included in the agenda
3	There are a number of errors in the AGAR accounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The instructions require all the figures to be rounded to nearest £1, however, this is not the case. - All boxes must be completed, even if a zero is required. - The fixed asset figure is incorrectly stated and does not agree to the asset register (as too many zeros have been included in the figure) 	<i>The AGAR accounts should be amended as noted. A sense check of the AGAR accounts and a review to ensure it has been completed in accordance with requirements should be carried out before submitting the AGAR for internal audit.</i>	Implemented
4	The council is sole trustee to a charity. However, review of the Charity Commission website shows that a number of year’s annual returns are outstanding. No evidence was provided that the council met as sole trustee twice in the financial year as required	<i>Annual returns to the Charity Commission for the sole trustee charity should be brought up to date and submitted to the Charity Commission. The council should provide evidence annually to the internal auditor that at least two meetings of the council as sole trustee have been held in</i>	2022/23 follow up – Most recent accounts outstanding for submission to Charity Commission 2021/22 follow up - Implemented

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	by the charity deed.		<i>the financial year.</i>	
2019/20 internal audit				
1	The council did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Account and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights in Summer 2019 for the 2018/19 accounts as the approval date of the accounts in the AGAR annual return was after the start date of the period for the exercise of public rights.		<i>The council must ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights for every financial year</i>	Implemented
2	The council made a number of payments earlier in the financial year via a Debit Payments Card. After the review of our 2018/19 internal audit report at the end of August 2019, usage of a debit card ceased. The Financial Regulations do not authorise the use of a Debit Payment Card. Therefore, there were no regulations in place setting the control procedures for the use of the Debit Card. including setting a maximum transaction limit, authorising procedures for payments, and a maximum monthly and annual limit.		<i>Financial Regulations must always be updated to authorise the use of a new form of payment such as a Debit Card. Should a debit card, credit card or other payments card be considered for use in the future, the Financial Regulations must be updated to establish the internal controls over the use of the council payment card. These controls should ensure there is a transaction limit placed on the card as well as a monthly and annual limit.</i>	NB this is a recommendation for any potential future use of a payments card. Our 2018/19 recommendation regarding the Debit Card was implemented during 2019/20 as use of a Debit Card ceased.
3	Fixed Assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure testing identified purchases of benches and a sewing machine in 2019/20, however, these additions could not be identified in the fixed asset register. • The asset register does not contain a column 		<i>The council need to review the 2019/20 fixed asset register and ensure that all capital items that are fixed asset additions and that are owned by the council are included in the asset register. The council need to review capital expenditure annually and update the asset</i>	NB The council have updated the asset register and included the revised fixed asset value in the final 2019/20 AGAR

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	<p>for date of purchase (month and year), therefore, it is difficult to identify in which financial year additions and disposals occurred.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community assets are valued at £nil, however, the Practitioner’s Guide requires all assets to have a value of at least £1: ‘In the special case where an authority receives an asset as a gift at zero cost, for example by transfer from a principal authority under a community asset transfer scheme, the asset should be included in the asset register with a nominal one pound (£1) value as a proxy for the zero cost.’ The valuation method of the village hall has changed from cost to insurance value. The practitioner’s guide states ‘Where an authority changes its method of asset valuation during a financial year, it will need to restate the prior year’s figure in Line 9 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.’ 	<p><i>register for capital items that are fixed assets (ie have a useful life of in excess of one year) which are owned by the council.</i></p> <p><i>The asset register format should be improved by adding month as well as year of purchase.</i></p> <p><i>The asset register should be amended to record community assets at £1 value each.</i></p> <p><i>The Council need to review the asset register and disclose the correct value in the Annual Return which should equate to the value for fixed assets disclosed in the 2018/19 annual return plus additions at cost less disposals at carrying value, unless there is a council resolution that supports the changes that have been made to the fixed asset accounting policy. If the council has authorised a change in valuation policy then the prior year comparative will also need to be changed.</i></p>	
--	---	--	--

Equality and Diversity Policy

Adopted 27/2/2020

1) Introduction

Hale Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

ii) We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored, and policies and practices are amended if necessary, to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

iii) All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Parish Council.

iv) Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in the Parish Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. The Parish Council is responsible for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity. Individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Parish Council.

2) Our Commitment as an Employer

- i) To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- ii) Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- iii) Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

3) Our Commitment as a Service Provider

- i) We aim to provide services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class.
- ii) We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.
- iii) We have clear procedures that enable our clients, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.
- vi) Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

4) Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

AGE

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

DISABILITY

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information wherever appropriate

RACE

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Parish Council.

GENDER

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men;
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men;
- offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of lesbians and gay men; and
- promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and

- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

EQUAL PAY

We will:

- ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Hale Parish Council

Data Protection Policy 2020

Adopted 27/2/2020

Introduction

Hale Parish Council is committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of data subjects and safely and securely processing their data in accordance with all of our legal obligations.

We hold personal data about our employees, residents, and other individuals for a variety of purposes.

This policy sets out how we seek to protect personal data and ensure that we understand the rules governing the use of the personal data to which we have access in the course of delivering our services. In particular, this policy requires staff to ensure that the Data Protection Officer (DPO) be consulted before any significant new data processing activity is initiated to ensure that relevant compliance steps are addressed.

Definitions

Purposes	<p>The purposes for which personal data may be used by us:</p> <p>Personnel, administrative, financial, regulatory, payroll and service development purposes <i>including the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Compliance with our legal, regulatory requirements and good practice including compliance with employment contracts</i>- <i>Gathering information to enable us to deliver our services</i>- <i>Operational reasons, such as recruitment, recording transactions, training, security vetting,</i>- <i>Investigating complaints and responding to enquiries</i>
-----------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Checking references, ensuring safe working practices, monitoring and managing staff access to systems and facilities and staff absences, administration and assessments</i> - <i>Monitoring staff conduct, disciplinary matters</i>
--	---

Personal data	<p>‘Personal data’ means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.</p> <p><i>Personal data we gather may include: individuals' phone number, home address, email address, educational background, financial and pay details, details of education and skills, marital status, nationality, and CV.</i></p>
Special categories of personal data	<p>Special categories of data include information about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or similar beliefs, trade union membership (or non-membership), physical or mental health or condition, criminal offences, or related proceedings, and genetic and biometric information —any use of special categories of personal data should be strictly controlled in accordance with this policy.</p>
Data controller	<p>‘Data controller’ means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data; where the purposes and means of such processing are determined by law.</p>
Data processor	<p>‘Processor’ means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller.</p>
Processing	<p>‘Processing’ means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction.</p>

Supervisory authority	This is the national body responsible for data protection. The supervisory authority for our organisation is the Information Commissioners Office.
------------------------------	--

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and councillors, who must be familiar with this policy and comply with its terms.

This policy supplements our other policies relating to internet and email use, and document retention. We may supplement or amend this policy by additional policies and guidelines from time to time. Any new or modified policy will be circulated before being adopted.

The principles

Hale Parish Council shall comply with the principles of data protection (the Principles) enumerated in the EU General Data Protection Regulation. We will make every effort possible in everything we do to comply with these principles. The Principles are:

1. Lawful, fair and transparent

Data collection must be fair, for a legal purpose and we must be open and transparent as to how the data will be used.

2. Limited for its purpose

Data can only be collected for a specific purpose.

3. Data minimisation

Any data collected must be necessary and not excessive for its purpose.

4. Accurate

The data we hold must be accurate and kept up to date.

5. Retention

We cannot store data longer than necessary.

6. Integrity and confidentiality

The data we hold must be kept safe and secure.

Accountability and transparency

We must ensure accountability and transparency in all our use of personal data. We must show how we comply with each Principle. You are responsible for keeping a written record of how all the data processing activities you are responsible for comply with each of the Principles. This must be kept up to date and must be available to the DPO for auditing compliance with this policy.

To comply with data protection laws and the accountability and transparency Principle of GDPR, we must demonstrate compliance. You are responsible for understanding your particular responsibilities to ensure we meet the following data protection obligations:

- Fully implement all appropriate technical and organisational measures
- Maintain up to date and relevant documentation on all processing activities
- Conducting data audits and risk assessments including Privacy Impact Assessments where these are required
- Implement measures to ensure privacy by design and default:
 - Data minimisation
 - Pseudonymisation where this is identified as necessary
 - Transparency
 - Allowing individuals to monitor processing
 - Creating and improving security and enhanced privacy procedures on an ongoing basis

Our procedures

Fair and lawful processing

We must process personal data fairly and lawfully in accordance with individuals' rights under the first Principle. This generally means that we should not process personal data unless we have a lawful basis for processing the personal data.

If we cannot apply a lawful basis (explained below), our processing does not conform to the first principle and will be unlawful. Data subjects have the right to have any data unlawfully processed erased

Data Controller

Hale Parish Council is classified as a data controller (and we also process data). We must

maintain our appropriate registration with the Information Commissioners Office in order to continue lawfully controlling and processing data.

If you are in any doubt about how we handle data, contact the DPO for clarification.

Lawful basis for processing data

We must establish a lawful basis for processing data. Ensure that any data you are responsible for managing has a written lawful basis approved by the DPO. It is your responsibility to check the lawful basis for any data you are working with and ensure all of your actions comply the lawful basis. At least one of the following conditions must apply whenever we process personal data:

1. Consent

We hold recent, clear, explicit, and defined consent for the individual's data to be processed for a specific purpose.

2. Contract

The processing is necessary to fulfil or prepare a contract for the individual.

3. Legal obligation

We have a legal obligation to process the data (excluding a contract).

4. Vital interests

Processing the data is necessary to protect a person's life or in a medical situation.

5. Public Task

Processing necessary to carry out a public function, a task of public interest or the function has a clear basis in law.

6. Legitimate interest

The processing is necessary for our legitimate interests. This condition does not apply if there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides the legitimate interest.

Deciding which condition to rely on

If you are making an assessment of the lawful basis, you must first establish that the processing is necessary. This means the processing must be a targeted, appropriate way of achieving the stated purpose. You cannot rely on a lawful basis if you can reasonably achieve the same purpose by some other means.

Remember that more than one basis may apply, and you should rely on what will best fit the purpose, not what is easiest.

Consider the following factors and document your answers:

- What is the purpose for processing the data?
- Can it reasonably be done in a different way?
- Is there a choice as to whether or not to process the data?
- Who does the processing benefit?
- After selecting the lawful basis, is this the same as the lawful basis the data subject would expect?
- What is the impact of the processing on the individual?
- Are you in a position of power over them?
- Are they a vulnerable person?
- Would they be likely to object to the processing?
- Are you able to stop the processing at any time on request, and have you factored in how to do this?

Our commitment to the first Principle requires us to document this process and show that we have considered which lawful basis best applies to each processing purpose, and fully justify these decisions.

We must also ensure that individuals whose data is being processed by us are informed of the lawful basis for processing their data, as well as the intended purpose. This should occur via a privacy notice. This applies whether we have collected the data directly from the individual, or from another source.

If you are responsible for making an assessment of the lawful basis and implementing the privacy notice for the processing activity, you must have this reviewed by the DPO.

Special categories of personal data

What are special categories of personal data?

Previously known as sensitive personal data, this means data about an individual which is more sensitive, so requires more protection. This type of data could create more significant risks to a person's fundamental rights and freedoms, for example by putting them at risk of unlawful discrimination. The special categories include, for example, information about an individual's:

- race
- ethnic origin
- politics
- religion
- trade union membership
- health

In most cases where we process special categories of personal data, we will require the data subject's *explicit* consent to do this unless exceptional circumstances apply or we are required to do this by law (e.g. to comply with legal obligations to ensure health and safety at work). Any such consent will need to clearly identify what the relevant data is, why it is being processed and to whom it will be disclosed.

The condition for processing special categories of personal data must comply with the law. If we do not have a lawful basis for processing special categories of data that processing activity must cease.

Responsibilities

Our responsibilities

- Analysing and documenting the type of personal data we hold
- Checking procedures to ensure they cover all the rights of the individual
- Identify the lawful basis for processing data
- Ensuring consent procedures are lawful
- Implementing and reviewing procedures to detect, report and investigate personal data breaches
- Store data in safe and secure ways
- Assess the risk that could be posed to individual rights and freedoms should data be compromised

Your responsibilities

- Fully understand your data protection obligations
- Check that any data processing activities you are dealing with comply with our policy and are justified
- Do not use data in any unlawful way

- Do not store data incorrectly, be careless with it or otherwise cause us to breach data protection laws and our policies through your actions
- Comply with this policy at all times
- Raise any concerns, notify any breaches or errors, and report anything suspicious or contradictory to this policy or our legal obligations without delay

Responsibilities of the Data Protection Officer

- Keeping the council updated about data protection responsibilities, risks and issues
- Reviewing all data protection procedures and policies on a regular basis
- Reviewing the data inventory
- Conducting internal audits of compliance with the GDPR
- Answering questions on data protection from staff and councilors
- Checking and approving data processing agreements with third parties
- Supporting the completion of Privacy Impact Assessments
- Investigating and reporting data breaches

IT Security Responsibilities

- Ensure all systems, services, software and equipment meet acceptable security standards
- Checking and scanning security hardware and software regularly to ensure it is functioning properly
- Researching third-party services, such as cloud services the council is considering using to store or process data

Accuracy and relevance

We will ensure that any personal data we process is accurate, adequate, relevant and not excessive, given the purpose for which it was obtained. We will not process personal data obtained for one purpose for any unconnected purpose unless the individual concerned has agreed to this or would otherwise reasonably expect this.

Individuals may ask that we correct inaccurate personal data relating to them. If you believe that information is inaccurate you should record the fact that the accuracy of the information is disputed and inform the DPO.

Data security

You must keep personal data secure against loss or misuse. Where other organisations process personal data as a service on our behalf, contracts must be implemented with those third-party organisations including specific data security arrangements.

Storing data securely

- In cases when data is stored on printed paper, it should be kept in a secure place where unauthorised personnel cannot access it
- Printed data should be shredded when it is no longer needed with reference to the time limits in the council's Document Retention Policy
- Data stored on a computer should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly. We encourage all staff to use a password manager to create and store their passwords.
- Data stored on CDs or memory sticks or plug in hard drives must be encrypted or password protected and locked away securely when they are not being used
- The DPO must approve any cloud used to store data
- Servers containing personal data must be kept in a secure location, away from general office space, and protected by security software
- Data should be regularly backed up in line with the council's backup procedures
- Personal Data should never be saved directly to mobile devices such as laptops, tablets or smartphones
- All possible technical measures must be put in place to keep data secure

Data retention

We must retain personal data for no longer than is necessary. What is necessary will depend on the circumstances of each case, taking into account the reasons that the personal data was obtained, but should be determined in a manner consistent with our data retention guidelines as specified in our data retention policy.

Transferring data internationally

There are restrictions on international transfers of personal data outside the EEA. You must not transfer personal data abroad, or anywhere else outside of normal rules and procedures without first securing an opinion from the DPO.

Rights of individuals

Individuals have rights to their data which we must respect and comply with to the best of our ability. We must ensure individuals can exercise their rights in the following ways:

1. Right to be informed

- Providing privacy notices which are concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible, free of charge, that are written in clear and plain language, particularly if aimed at children.
- Keeping a record of how we use personal data to demonstrate compliance with the need for accountability and transparency.

2. Right of access

- Enabling individuals to access their personal data and supplementary information
- Allowing individuals to be aware of and verify the lawfulness of the processing activities

3. Right to rectification

- We must rectify or amend the personal data of the individual if requested because it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- This must be done without delay, and no later than one month. This can be extended to two months with permission from the DPO.

4. Right to erasure

- We must delete or remove an individual's data if requested and there is no compelling reason for its continued processing.

5. Right to restrict processing

- We must comply with any request to restrict, block, or otherwise suppress the processing of personal data.
- We are permitted to store personal data if it has been restricted, but not process it further. We must retain enough data to ensure the right to restriction is respected in the future.

6. Right to data portability

- We must provide individuals with their data so that they can reuse it for their own purposes or across different services.
- We must provide it in a commonly used, machine-readable format, and send it directly to another controller if requested.

7. Right to object

- We must respect the right of an individual to object to data processing based on legitimate interest or the performance of a public interest task.

- We must respect the right of an individual to object to direct marketing, including profiling.
- We must respect the right of an individual to object to processing their data for scientific and historical research and statistics.

8. Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

- We must respect the rights of individuals in relation to automated decision making and profiling.
- Individuals retain their right to object to such automated processing, have the rationale explained to them, and request human intervention.

Privacy notices

When to supply a privacy notice

A privacy notice must be supplied at the time the data is obtained if obtained directly from the data subject. If the data is not obtained directly from the data subject, the privacy notice must be provided within a reasonable period of having obtained the data, which mean within one month.

If the data is being used to communicate with the individual, then the privacy notice must be supplied at the latest when the first communication takes place.

If disclosure to another recipient is envisaged, then the privacy notice must be supplied prior to the data being disclosed.

What to include in a privacy notice

Privacy notices must be concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible. They are provided free of charge and must be written in clear and plain language, particularly if aimed at children

The following information must be included in a privacy notice to all data subjects:

- Identification and contact information of the data controller and the data protection officer
- The purpose of processing the data and the lawful basis for doing so
- The legitimate interests of the controller or third party, if applicable
- The right to withdraw consent at any time, if applicable

- The category of the personal data (only for data not obtained directly from the data subject)
- Any recipient or categories of recipients of the personal data
- Detailed information of any transfers to third countries and safeguards in place
- The retention period of the data or the criteria used to determine the retention period, including details for the data disposal after the retention period
- The right to lodge a complaint with the ICO, and internal complaint procedures
- The source of the personal data, and whether it came from publicly available sources (only for data not obtained directly from the data subject)
- Any existence of automated decision making, including profiling and information about how those decisions are made, their significances and consequences to the data subject
- Whether the provision of personal data is part of a statutory or contractual requirement or obligation and possible consequences for any failure to provide the data (only for data obtained directly from the data subject)

Subject Access Requests

What is a subject access request?

An individual has the right to receive confirmation that their data is being processed, access to their personal data and supplementary information which means the information which should be provided in a privacy notice.

How we deal with subject access requests

We must provide an individual with a copy of the information the request, free of charge. This must occur without delay, and within one month of receipt. We endeavour to provide data subjects access to their information in commonly used electronic formats, and where possible, provide direct access to the information through a remote accessed secure system.

If complying with the request is complex or numerous, the deadline can be extended by two months, but the individual must be informed within one month. You must obtain approval from the DPO before extending the deadline.

We can refuse to respond to certain requests, and can, in circumstances of the request being manifestly unfounded or excessive, charge a fee. If the request is for a large quantity of data, we can request the individual specify the information they are requesting. This can only be done with express permission from the DPO.

Once a subject access request has been made, you must not change or amend any of the data that has been requested. Doing so is a criminal offence.

Right to erasure

What is the right to erasure?

Individuals have a right to have their data erased and for processing to cease in the following circumstances:

- Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was originally collected and / or processed
- Where consent is withdrawn
- Where the individual objects to processing and there is no overriding legitimate interest for continuing the processing
- The personal data was unlawfully processed or otherwise breached data protection laws
- To comply with a legal obligation
- The processing relates to a child

How we deal with the right to erasure

We can only refuse to comply with a right to erasure in the following circumstances:

- To exercise the right of freedom of expression and information
- To comply with a legal obligation for the performance of a public interest task or exercise of official authority or the comply with a contract
- For public health purposes in the public interest
- For archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research, historical research or statistical purposes
- The exercise or defence of legal claims

If personal data that needs to be erased has been passed onto other parties or recipients, they must be contacted and informed of their obligation to erase the data. If the individual asks, we must inform them of those recipients.

The right to object

Individuals have the right to object to their data being used on grounds relating to their particular situation. We must cease processing unless:

- We have legitimate grounds for processing which override the interests, rights and freedoms of the individual.
- The processing relates to the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims.

We must always inform the individual of their right to object at the first point of communication, i.e. in the privacy notice. We must offer a way for individuals to object online.

The right to restrict automated profiling or decision making

We may only carry out automated profiling or decision making that has a legal or similarly significant effect on an individual in the following circumstances:

- It is necessary for the entry into or performance of a contract.
- Based on the individual's explicit consent.
- Otherwise authorised by law.

In these circumstances, we must:

- Give individuals detailed information about the automated processing.
- Offer simple ways for them to request human intervention or challenge any decision about them.
- Carry out regular checks and user testing to ensure our systems are working as intended.

The right to data portability

We must provide the data requested in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format. We must provide this data either to the individual who has requested it, or to the data controller they have requested it be sent to. This must be done free of charge and without delay, and no later than one month. This can be extended to 2 months for complex or numerous requests, but the individual must be informed of the extension within 1 month and you must get an opinion from the DPO first.

Third parties

Using third party controllers and processors

As a data controller we must have written contracts in place with any third-party data processors that we use. The contract must contain specific clauses which set out our and their liabilities, obligations and responsibilities.

As a data controller, we must only appoint processors who can provide sufficient guarantees under GDPR and that the rights of data subjects will be respected and protected.

As a data processor, we must only act on the documented instructions of a controller. We acknowledge our responsibilities as a data processor under GDPR and we will protect and respect the rights of data subjects.

Contracts

Our contracts must comply with the standards set out by the ICO and, where possible, follow the standard contractual clauses which are available. Our contracts with data processors must set out the subject matter and duration of the processing, the nature and stated purpose of the processing activities, the types of personal data and categories of data subject, and the obligations and rights of the controller.

At a minimum, our contracts must include terms that specify:

- Acting only on written instructions
- Those involved in processing the data are subject to a duty of confidence
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the security of the processing
- Sub-processors will only be engaged with the prior consent of the controller and under a written contract
- The controller will assist the processor in dealing with subject access requests and allowing data subjects to exercise their rights under GDPR
- The processor will assist the controller in meeting its GDPR obligations in relation to the security of processing, notification of data breaches and implementation of Data Protection Impact Assessments
- Delete or return all personal data at the end of the contract
- Submit to regular audits and inspections and provide whatever information necessary for the controller and processor to meet their legal obligations.
- Nothing will be done by either the controller or processor to infringe on GDPR.

Criminal offence data

Criminal record checks

Any criminal record checks are justified by law. Criminal record checks cannot be undertaken based solely on the consent of the subject. We cannot keep a comprehensive register of criminal offence data. All data relating to criminal offences is considered to be a special category of personal data and must be treated as such.

Audits, monitoring and training

Data audits

Regular data audits to manage and mitigate risks will inform the data inventory. This contains information on what data is held, where it is stored, how it is used, who is responsible and any further regulations or retention timescales that may be relevant. You must conduct a regular data audit to ensure an up to date data inventory is maintained and make this available to the DPO.

Monitoring

Everyone must observe this policy. The DPO will carry out periodic internal audits to monitor compliance of the council with this policy. The council will keep this policy under review and amend or change it as required. You must notify the DPO of any breaches of this policy. You must comply with this policy fully and at all times.

Training

You will receive adequate training on provisions of data protection law specific for your role. You must complete all training as requested. If you move role or responsibilities, you are responsible for requesting new data protection training relevant to your new role or responsibilities.

If you have queries on data protection matters, contact the DPO.

Reporting breaches

Any breach of this policy or of data protection laws must be reported as soon as practically possible. This means as soon as you have become aware of a breach. The council has a legal obligation to report any data breaches to the ICO within 72 hours.

All members of staff have an obligation to report actual or potential data protection compliance failures. This allows us to:

- Investigate the failure and take remedial steps if necessary
- Maintain a register of compliance failures
- Notify the ICO of any compliance failures that are material either in their own right or as part of a pattern of failures

Any member of staff who fails to notify of a breach or is found to have known or suspected a breach has occurred but has not followed the correct reporting procedures will be liable to disciplinary action.

Failure to comply

We take compliance with this policy very seriously. Failure to comply puts both you and the organisation at risk.

The importance of this policy means that failure to comply with any requirement may lead to disciplinary action under our procedures.

Making Information Available

The Publication Scheme is a means by which the Council can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local people to take an interest in the work of the Council and its role within the community.

In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Scheme specifies the classes of information which the Council publishes or intends to publish. It is supplemented with an Information Guide which will give greater detail of what the Council will make available and hopefully make it easier for people to access it.

All formal meetings of Council and its committees are subject to statutory notice being given on notice boards and the website. The Council publishes an annual programme of meetings. All formal meetings are open to the public and press and reports to those meetings and relevant background papers are available for the public to see. The Council welcomes public participation and has a public participation session on each Council and committee meeting. Details can be seen in the Council's Standing Orders, which are available on its Website or at its Offices.

Occasionally, Council or committees may need to consider matters in private. Examples of this are matters involving personal details of staff, or a particular member of the public, or where details of commercial/contractual sensitivity are to be discussed. This will only happen after a formal resolution has been passed to exclude the press and public and reasons for the decision are stated. Minutes from all formal meetings, including the confidential parts are public documents.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 requires written records to be made of certain decisions taken by officers under delegated powers. These are not routine operational and administrative decisions such as giving instructions to the workforce or paying an invoice approved by Council or under Financial Regulations but would include action taken after consultation with the Chairman, such as responding to a planning application in advance of Council. In other words, decisions which would have been made by Council or committee had the delegation not been in place.

The 2014 Regulations also amend the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to allow the public or press to film, photograph or make an audio recording of council and committee meetings normally open to the public. The Council will where possible facilitate such recording unless it is being disruptive. It will also take steps to ensure that children, the vulnerable and members of the public who object to being filmed are protected without undermining the broader purpose of the meeting.

The Council will be pleased to make special arrangements on request for persons who do not have English as their first language or those with hearing or sight difficulties.

Disclosure Information

The Council will as necessary undertake checks on both staff and Members with the Disclosure and Barring Service and will comply with their Code of Conduct relating to the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information. It will include an appropriate operating procedure in its integrated quality management system.

Data Transparency

The Council has resolved to act in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (September 2011). This sets out the key principles for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of public data and is intended to help them meet obligations of the legislative framework concerning information.

“Public data” means the objective, factual data on which policy decisions are based and on which public services are assessed, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery.

The Code will therefore underpin the Council’s decisions on the release of public data and ensure it is proactive in pursuing higher standards and responding to best practice as it develops.

The principles of the Code are:

Demand led: new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability

Open: the provision of public data will be integral to the Council's engagement with residents so that it drives accountability to them.

Timely: data will be published as soon as possible following production.

Government has also issued a further Code of Recommended Practice on Transparency, compliance of which is compulsory for parish councils with turnover (gross income or gross expenditure) not exceeding £25,000 per annum. These councils will be exempt from the requirement to have an external audit from April 2017. Hale Parish Council exceeds this turnover but will never the less ensure the following information is published on its Website for ease of access:

- All transactions above £100.
- End of year accounts
- Annual Governance Statements
- Internal Audit Reports
- List of Councillor or Member responsibilities
- Details of public land and building assets
- Draft minutes of Council and committees within one month
- Agendas and associated papers no later than three clear days before the meeting.

Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various types of document.
- 1.2 Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.
- 1.3 Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.
- 1.4 It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.
- 1.5 In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

2. Scope and Objectives of the Policy

- 2.1 The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:
 - Retained – and for how long; or
 - Disposed of – and if so by what method.
- 2.2 There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed during business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value. Unimportant records of information include:
 - 'With compliments' slips.
 - Catalogues and trade journals.
 - Non-acceptance of invitations.
 - Trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to Council business.
 - Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
 - Out of date distribution lists.
- 2.3 Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports may be destroyed.
- 2.4 Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to be disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations

3. Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

- 3.1 Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation at least on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.
- 3.2 Councils should ensure that all employees are aware of the retention/disposal schedule.

4. Document Retention Protocol

- 4.1 Councils should have in place an adequate system for documenting the activities of their service. This system should consider the legislative and regulatory environments to which they work.
- 4.2 Records of each activity should be complete and accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:
 - Facilitate an audit or examination of the business by anyone so authorised.
 - Protect the legal and other rights of the Council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
 - Verify individual consent to record, manage and record disposal of their personal data.
 - Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.
- 4.3 To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:
 - Records created and maintained should be arranged in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information under the General Data Protection Regulations
 - Documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining should be placed at the records office.
- 4.4 The retention schedules in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention or Disposal provide guidance on the recommended minimum retention periods for specific classes of documents and records. These schedules have been compiled from recommended best practice from the Public Records Office, the Records Management Society of Great Britain and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- 4.5 Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

5. Document Disposal Protocol

- 5.1 Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:
 - Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
 - Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?
 - Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
 - Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?
- 5.2 When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned. A record of the disposal will be kept complying with the General Data Protection Regulations.
- 5.3 Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:
 - Non-confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.
 - Confidential records or records giving personal information: shred documents.
 - Deletion of computer records.

- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

5.4 The following principles should be followed when disposing of records:

- All records containing personal or confidential information should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. Failure to do so could lead to the Council being prosecuted under the General Data Protection Regulations, the Freedom of Information Act or cause reputational damage.
- Where computer records are deleted steps should be taken to ensure that data is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner.
- Where documents are of historical interest it may be appropriate that they are transmitted to the County Records office.
- Back-up copies of documents should also be destroyed (including electronic or photographed documents unless specific provisions exist for their disposal).

6. General Data Protection Regulations – Obligation to Dispose of Certain Data

6.1 The General Data Protection Regulations require that personal information must not be retained longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally obtained. GDPR defines personal information as:

Data that relates to a living individual who can be identified:

- a) from the data, or
- b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller.

It includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the Council or other person in respect of the individual.

6.2 GDPR provides an exemption for information about identifiable living individuals that is held for research, statistical or historical purposes to be held indefinitely provided that the specific requirements are met.

6.3 Councils are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations namely:

- Personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met.
- Personal data shall only be obtained for specific purposes and processed in a compatible manner.
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant, but not excessive.
- Personal data shall be accurate and up to date.
- Personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary.
- Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject.
- Personal data shall be kept secure.

6.4 External storage providers or archivists that are holding Council documents must also comply with the above principles of the General Data Protection Regulations.

7. Scanning of Documents

7.1 In general, once a document has been scanned on to a document image system the original becomes redundant. There is no specific legislation covering the format for which local

government records are retained following electronic storage, except for those prescribed by HM Revenue and Customs.

- 7.2 As a rule, hard copies of scanned documents should be retained for three months after scanning.
- 7.3 Original documents required for VAT and tax purposes should be retained for six years unless a shorter period has been agreed with HM Revenue and Customs.

8. Review of Document Retention

- 8.1 It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document on a regular basis (at least every three years in accordance with the *Code of Practice on the Management of Records* issued by the Lord Chancellor).
- 8.2 This document has been compiled from various sources of recommended best practice and with reference to the following documents and publications:
 - *Local Council Administration*, Charles Arnold-Baker, 910^h edition, Chapter 11
 - Local Government Act 1972, sections 225 – 229, section 234
 - SLCC Advice Note 316 Retaining Important Documents
 - SLCC Clerks' Manual: Storing Books and Documents
 - *Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records* issued under Section 46 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*

9. List of Documents

- 9.1 The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention and Disposal. This is updated regularly in accordance with any changes to legal requirements.



Hale Parish Council

Expenses Policy

Adopted on 22 October 2018

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

It is the policy of Hale Parish Council to reimburse its employees and elected members for expenses incurred in performing the duties required by Hale Parish Council, such as travelling on Council business, and attending training or meetings on behalf of the Council, provided the expenditure has been authorised, receipted and certified in accordance with this policy.

Employees and members should not be either financially disadvantaged or advantaged due to genuine Council expenses.

All expense claims must be submitted using the Expenses Claim Form and accompanied by receipts. Unless the claim is for petrol, whereby mileage must be calculated in line with this policy.

2. AUTHORISED DUTIES

Expenses claims will be considered for the following:

- Travelling and associated travel expenses for journeys required to conduct Council business outside the Parish.
- Travelling and associated travel expenses for journeys required for training outside the Parish.

This does not include travel between home and office unless the employee is recognised as being a “contractual home-based employee”.

3. METHOD OF TRAVEL

Employees and members should travel by the most cost-effective mode of transport taking into account journey time and the nature of the journey.

Travel by car will be reimbursed at current National Joint Council rates and parking will be paid. Employees and members are under no obligation to drive long distances they feel unable to sustain mentally or physically. Where employees and members use their own vehicle, they should ensure that the vehicle is in good working order, fully insured, taxed and with a valid MOT.

Approved Mileage Allowance Payments

Type of Vehicle	First 10,000 Miles	Above 10,000 Miles
Cars and Vans	£0.45 Per Mile	£0.25 Per Mile
Motorcycles	£0.24 Per Mile	£0.24 Per Mile
Cycle	£0.20 Per Mile	£0.20 Per Mile

Employees and members are required to keep track of Council mileage incurred in the tax year (1 April to 31 March) to ensure the correct rates are applied.

If an employee or member carries any other employee or member in their own vehicle when travelling on Council business, that employee or member can claim £0.05 per passenger per mile. The employee and/or member passengers must also be travelling on Council business to qualify.

Public transport will be preferred where more practical and cost effective. All rail and air travel should be the most cost effective fare available. Employees and members should, as far as possible, travel standard class and should attempt to book their journeys sufficiently in advance to obtain the best possible price.

Where Oyster cards are used for tube, DLR, or tram, the employee or member should provide evidence of the cost incurred by printing off their online statement or by printing off the journey cost provided by the Oyster fare finder.

Taxis shall only be used when essential (e.g. urgency, awkward hours, transport of baggage, health reasons etc).

4. SUBSISTENCE

An employee or member may claim for the costs of meals and beverages reasonably purchased when travelling on Council business. This is intended to reimburse the employee for additional expense as a result of having to travel on Council business and personal incidental expenses cannot be claimed.

Breakfast, lunch and evening meals will be reimbursed up to a maximum amount of £40 per day. If employees and members incur costs in excess of the claimable £40 per day, only £40 of any receipts will be reimbursed.

Additionally, the employee or member may claim “personal incidental expenses” up to a maximum of £5 per day to cover items such as telephone calls, newspapers and laundry.

The total of any such costs must not exceed £5 otherwise no reimbursement will be allowed – *ie* the allowance will not be regarded as a contribution to such costs.

If the employee or member is away for more than one night, the daily limits (*ie* £40 and £5) may be averaged across the number of nights that the employee is away.

The rules above apply to overseas travel as well as UK travel. However, in some cases, it may be necessary to allow higher limits for subsistence costs, subject to discussion and approval from the Clerk.

5. ACCOMMODATION

The cost of accommodation will be reimbursed when it can be clearly demonstrated that it is impossible or impractical to attend the approved duty without staying over the previous

or following evening (e.g. where an employee or members' journey would have to start from home before 06:00am or return home after 10:00pm).

Accommodation sought must be the most cost effective and take into account a reasonable distance required to travel to/from the approved duty.

6. ENTERTAINING

Employees and members should only entertain visitors and guests where it is likely to assist the Council in its objectives and with the prior approval of the Clerk.

In general, entertainment counts as business-related if its purpose is to discuss a particular Council project, maintain an existing service or to form a new service.

By contrast, entertainment won't count as business-related if its purpose is of a social nature.

Amounts claimed should be reasonable and appropriate.

7. EYE TESTS AND SPECTACLES

Hale Parish Council recognises its obligations under the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992 (Amended 2002). As such, the Council will contribute £25 towards the cost of an eye test conducted by a suitably qualified optician, if you use display screen (computer monitor) equipment for a significant part of your working day on Council business. The Council will only reimburse one eye test in any twelve month period.

If the test reveals that spectacles are required for exclusively VDU work, the Council will contribute £75 towards the cost of basic spectacles exclusively for VDU use. This policy does not apply to contact lenses.

8. PROCEDURE

All expenses claims must be made on the claim form with VAT receipts attached as appropriate. Claim forms are available from the Clerk to Hale Parish Council.

All receipts should be originals.

It is important that employees and members keep full records of expenses claimed and the reasons the expenses were incurred so that they can provide appropriate evidence, if requested, to HMRC. In respect of car travel, employees and members should keep a log showing where the journeys commenced and ceased and the number of miles travelled.

The completed and signed form, with receipts attached, should be given to the Clerk for processing.

The Clerk will scrutinise all claims submitted. If satisfied that the claims are eligible, they will be approved and paid.

All overseas transactions in local currency must be converted to sterling at the valid rate on day of expense.

All employees and members should ensure that expense claims are submitted at the time they are incurred, or within a period of no more than three months following the expense. If the employee or member fails to submit a claim for a particular item at the time and instead claims it later after a period of three months has lapsed, Hale Parish Council may, at the discretion of the Clerk, refuse to reimburse the expenditure.

9. REIMBURSEMENT

Expense claims are normally paid in the following monthly payment run, unless circumstances require payment sooner.

10. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

There may be other incidental expenses incurred by employees and members that are not covered by these rules such as stationary, phone calls, postage etc which would then prompt a discussion with the Clerk. All cases of doubt should be referred promptly to the Clerk prior to incurring the expense.

11. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

The following categories of expense will not be reimbursed:

- Expenses whereby credit card receipts are the only available evidence, unless exceptionally approved by Council
- Personal entertainment of any sort
- Mini bar consumables

12. ABUSE OF THIS POLICY

Any abuse in the application of this policy by employees will be dealt with in accordance with Hale Parish Council's disciplinary policy and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

Deliberate falsification of a claim or the evidence needed to make a claim by employees will constitute misconduct. "Falsification" includes the failure to pass on any discount obtained in the course of incurring an expense.

13. REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed regularly and updated subject to Council request and changes to national framework.

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

PRINCIPLES & PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the Council's commitment to information security within the Council and provides clear direction on responsibilities and procedures.

Hale Parish Council is a Data Controller, as defined under the Data Protection Act 2018, and has registered as such with the Information Commissioner's Office.

PROTOCOLS

System Security Processes and Procedures

The Council will provide and maintain security processes and procedures for all key information systems'. The procedures will uphold the principles of confidentiality, integrity, availability and suitability and be assessed for their impact upon other systems and services.

The security procedures will provide preventative measures to reduce the risks to the system, the information held within the system and the service it supports.

A Continuity plan will be developed and maintained for each system to ensure the principles are sustained and enable the continuation of services following failure or damage to systems or facilities.

The Clerk will be responsible for the implementation and promotion of the procedures.

Physical Security

Adequate and practical access controls will be provided in all areas in which personal and business data is stored or used. Unattended rooms should be secured at all times with locked doors as a minimum security requirement.

All documents disclosing identifiable information will be transported in sealed containers eg envelopes. Within their level of authority, staff will be responsible for minimising the risk of theft or vandalism of the data and equipment through common-sense precautions. In particular high value equipment such as, laptop computers, should not be left unattended or unsecured and paper records should not be left in public view.

The physical environment in which data and equipment is stored will be suitable and fit for purpose to ensure the safety of the data and equipment.

Logical Security

All computerised information and systems must be regularly backed up to a secure environment.

All computerised information systems will be password controlled and all passwords will be treated with the strictest confidence and users will not divulge their password to any unauthorised person. All sensitive data will be password protected.

Copyright and licences

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring all computer software packages and non-electronic media for use within an information environment are used in accordance with the terms and conditions of use as set out in the licence agreement.

Disposal and movement of equipment and media

Any media or IT equipment disposed of by the Council will not contain any data or codes that could allow an individual to be identified from it. The disposal of equipment will be made under a controlled and documented environment satisfying the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. The disposal of media such as disks and memory sticks must ensure that data cannot be recovered. Disposal of such media through the "everyday" waste collection is not permitted. The Council will implement processes to ensure appropriate disposal of such media.

An inventory of all Council computer equipment will be maintained. Details of any equipment or media disposed of or relocated (other than portable equipment) must be recorded.

Personal Computers

Computer users have responsibility for the security of the equipment in their care and shall not commit an act to compromise the data or Information Security Policy.

Computer users will be made aware of their responsibilities through this policy

Staff and Councillors' Responsibilities

The Council will make every reasonable effort to ensure that staff and councillors are aware of their responsibilities for the security of information. However, each councillor or member of staff is responsible for ensuring that Security Policy is adhered to and report any breaches of security.

Incident Reporting

Incidents affecting security must be reported to the Clerk as quickly as possible.

Model Publication Scheme Adopted 27/2/2020

Hale Parish Council

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

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

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do.

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

What we spend and how we spend it.

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

How we make decisions.

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

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers.

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

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered. The classes of information will not generally include:

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

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

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

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

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale. Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

April 2008 2 Model Publication Scheme V1.0

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

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

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

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

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

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

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

Written Requests

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

INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM HALE PARISH COUNCIL UNDER THE MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

Contact – clerk@haleparishcouncil.gov.uk

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Council Charge
<p>Class 1 – Who we are and what we do (organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) <i>This will be current information only.</i></p>		
<p>Who’s who on the Council and its Committees and/or Working Groups</p> <p>Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council Members (Contact is via the Clerk)</p> <p>Location of Council and accessibility details</p> <p>Staffing Structure</p>	<p>Website</p> <p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Telephone Council</p> <p>Notice Boards</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>Free</p> <p>Free</p> <p>Free</p> <p>Free</p>

<p>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial Information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p> <p><i>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</i></p>		
<p>Annual Return and Report by Auditors</p> <p>Finalised Budget & Precept</p> <p>Borrowing Approval Letter (Not applicable)</p> <p>Financial Standing Orders and Regulations</p> <p>Grants Given and Received</p> <p>List of current contracts awarded and value of contract</p> <p>Members Allowance & Expenses (Hale Parish Council do not currently pay any Members Allowances)</p>	<p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk</p> <p>Note – some of the above documents may be available on the web site</p>	<p>£0.05p per sheet</p> <p>£0.05p per sheet</p> <p>£0.05p per sheet</p> <p>Free</p> <p>£0.05p per sheet</p> <p>Free</p> <p>£0.05p per sheet</p> <p>Free</p>

			Free
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)			
Parish Plan	Hale Parish Council do not have a Parish Plan		Free
Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting if undertaken	Web site / Hard copy from Clerk		Free
Newsletters when issued	Distributed to all households Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk		Free
Local Charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines (There are currently no charters in operation)			
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) <i>Current and previous council year as a minimum</i>			
Timetable of Meetings (Council, Committee and Parish meetings) Agendas of meetings (As above) Minutes of Meetings (As above) Reports presented to council meetings – these form part of the agenda papers Responses to consultation papers Responses to planning applications	Website Website Website Part of Agenda papers Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk		Free Free Free Hard Copy £0.05p per sheet Free

Byelaws (where applicable)	N/A	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) <i>Current information only</i>		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference if appropriate Delegated authority in respect of officers Code of Conduct Other Policy Statements	Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk Electronic mail (if documents retained in electronic format) – Contact Parish Clerk Some documentation may be available on website	£0.05p per sheet Free
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Assets Register Register of Members’ Interests / Register of Gifts and Hospitality	Hard Copy – Contact Parish Clerk Website Hard Copy (Contact Clerk)	£0.05p per sheet Free £0.05p per sheet

<p>Class 7 – The Services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only</p>		
<p>Allotments</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council do not currently have any allotments</p>	
<p>Burial Grounds and closed churchyards</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council do not currently have any Burial Grounds or closed churchyards</p>	
<p>Community Centres and Village Halls</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council are Custodian and de facto Sole Managing Trustee for Hale Village Hall</p>	
<p>Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities:</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council own 3 greens</p>	
<p>Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council own a War Memorial and associated assets – Contact Clerk for sight of Asset Register</p>	
<p>Bus shelters</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council do not own any bus shelters</p>	
<p>Markets & Public Conveniences</p>	<p>Hale Parish Council do not own any Markets or Public Conveniences</p>	
<p>Other Assets</p>	<p>Asset register – please Contact clerk to Council</p>	
<p>Agency agreements</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

BASIS OF SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying at £0.05p per sheet (black and white)	Actual cost
	Colour copying not available.	
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee	Not applicable	
Other	Not applicable	

HALE VILLAGE HALL
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE /
VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Adopted 27/2/2020

**HALE VILLAGE HALL OPERATES ITS OWN SAFEGUARDING POLICY AS SET OUT
BELOW AND ALSO IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND CODES
OF CONDUCT PROVIDED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Hale Village Hall provides a safe venue for people to come and participate in community activities including social and other events. In so doing, the Village Hall's personnel may come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is:

- I) To provide protection for anyone who visits Hale village Hale or takes part in activities organised by Hale Village Hall
- II) To provide all Hale Village Hall representatives dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults with good practise guidelines
- III) To provide all Hale Village Hall representatives with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they have concerns that a person may be experiencing, or be at risk from, some form of abuse
- IV) To guide Hale Village Hall representatives on responding appropriately to, and reporting, safeguarding concerns

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All staff, coaches, trustees, councillors and volunteers and associated persons such as those employed under a contract for services and will be referred to as Hale Village Hall representatives throughout this policy. All Hale Village Hall representatives will be made aware of this policy.

TRUSTEES

In accordance with the Charity Commission guidelines, there are four clear expectations of trustees

- 1) Provide a safe and trusted environment
- 2) Set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding
- 3) Have adequate policies and procedures and measures to protect people
- 4) Handle incidents as they arise and report promptly to the relevant authorities

POLICY STATEMENT

Hale Village Hall is involved in the provision of services, activities and events for children, young people and vulnerable adults and has a duty of care towards all who visit the facility.

HALE VILLAGE HALL RECOGNISES

- a) The welfare of all is paramount
- b) All children, young people and vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse
- c) All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- d) All Hale Village Hall representatives have a responsibility to report concerns

RECRUITMENT OF HALE VILLAGE HALL REPRESENTATIVES

Good practice recommends that all representatives who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults should undergo DBS Checks.

If the result of the DBS Check and or references raise doubts about the suitability of the individual, they shall not be appointed.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All Hale Village Hall representatives will conduct themselves in a way that promotes best practice.

Good practice can reduce the risk of behaviour being misinterpreted or individuals leaving themselves vulnerable to allegations of abuse

Representatives should adopt a common sense approach when dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults. For example, there may be times when representatives are required to carry out first aid and the following guidelines should be followed wherever possible.

- a) Treat all visitors equally with respect and dignity
- b) Challenge inappropriate language or behaviour when used by colleagues or visitors
- c) Ensure that individuals do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst away from others
- d) If an individual is alone in a room with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should leave the door ajar and make others aware of the situation
- e) No photographs or video footage should be taken or published without parental consent or the consent of the individuals concerned
- f) Where possible, Hale Village Hall representatives should not touch children, young people or vulnerable adults, but if it is essential, they should obtain the individual's permission before they touch them. They should provide a commentary of what they are doing and why. If a person is unconscious, a commentary should still be given to any colleagues or bystanders present

RECOGNISING ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS

A child, young person or vulnerable adult may tell a representative or a third party about abuse they have suffered

Representatives may also have concerns if:

- a) An individual has suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, especially in unusual areas such as cheeks or torso
- b) An individual uses inappropriate or explicit language or displays sexually explicit behaviour
- c) An individual displays sudden or erratic changes of behaviour
- d) An individual displays a distrust of adults, especially with those who they would be expected to have a close relationship with

THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE

The presence of one or more of the above is not proof that abuse has occurred as there may be other reasons. It is important not to overreact. Children, young people and vulnerable adults can often have bruises and it can be difficult to differentiate from the norm.

Should a representative be concerned, it is not their responsibility to decide if there is evidence of abuse, but it is their duty to act upon concerns and if in doubt, report it to the designated Safeguarding Officer / Assistant Officer as soon possible.

REPORTING PROCEDURE & CONFIDENTIALITY

Should a child, young person or vulnerable adult confide in a representative that they are being abused, the representative should:

- a) **Keep Calm**
- b) **Tell the person concerned that they cannot keep the information secret, if they believe the person has been harmed**
- c) **Reassure the person that they were right to inform them and make it clear that they are not in any way to blame for what has happened**
- d) **Take what is said seriously**
- e) **Keep questions to a minimum**
- f) **Make a full written report of the conversation as soon as possible**
- g) **Pass the report on to the Safeguarding / Assistant Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible**

Once the Safeguarding Officer or Assistant Officer has received the report, they will decide upon what action to take by following local authority, multi agency safeguarding procedures. The Safeguarding Officer / Assistant Officer may liaise with the chair of the Village Hall Management Committee, if considered necessary and follow up with a report and letter confirming that the matter has been referred to the appropriate agency. A note should be made of the action taken and filed with the report.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A HALE VILLAGE HALL REPRESENTATIVE

If an allegation of abuse is made against a Hale Village Hall representative, this should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer immediately. The officer will then liaise with the chair of the Hale Village Hall Management Committee as soon as possible to decide if the matter should be referred to the appropriate agency and or police.

The Chair of the Hale Village Hall Management Committee will then decide what action to take in respect of the Hale Village Hall representative and whether and how they will be informed of the allegations.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as necessary.

Adopted by the Hale Village Hall Management Committee on:

The Safeguarding Officer is: Clerk to Hale Parish Council

The Assistant Safeguarding Officer is: Cllr Carol Anderson

Hale Village Hall

High Street

Hale

Liverpool

L24 4AE

Registered Company No.

Charity Commission No.

HALE PARISH COUNCIL -VOLUNTEER POLICY

ADOPTED 18 NOVEMBER 2019

Hale Parish Council acknowledges and values the support that volunteers provide to the local community. This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in activities overseen by Hale Parish Council. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of Hale Parish Council and its volunteers.

- This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of, but not employed by, the Parish Council. Volunteers are unpaid and of their own free will contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.
- Parish Council volunteer opportunities are advertised through Parish media, including Hale Parish Council Newsletter, Parish Council notice boards and the Parish Council website.
- Volunteers are requested to respect neighbours and residents when carrying out voluntary work. If the nature of the work is such that it is potentially disruptive to others, it should only be carried out during sociable daylight hours, unless agreed with the council.
- Volunteers expect to be treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith, disability or sexual orientation.
- Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role. It must be sufficient to ensure their health and safety and, as far as reasonably practicable, that of any people who might be affected by the work. The Parish Council will work with the individual authorised to undertake the work to assess training needs and provide appropriate training as required.
- Volunteers must undergo an induction appropriate for the task being undertaken. This should include health and safety, what to do if there is a problem and an introduction to other relevant individuals. The Parish Council will work with the individual authorised to undertake the work to ensure appropriate induction takes place.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken in order to identify risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. The Clerk must receive a copy of such risk assessment records. The Parish Council will work with the individual authorised to undertake the work to ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.
- On condition that volunteers are working on behalf of the Parish Council and at their direct request, then they will be insured under the Parish Council's Public Liability and Employer's Liability cover. However, the Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage and if volunteers use their own tools or equipment the Parish Council cannot be held liable for any injury, loss or damage arising from a fault or defect with these.
- Volunteers must carry out only less hazardous work involving use of non-powered tools where possible. However, if using powered lawn mowers or other grass cutting equipment, stout footwear must be worn. Sensible and appropriate protective equipment should be worn including stout footwear, safety goggles(strimmers), high visibility vests and earmuffs.
- Expenses will be paid only with the prior approval of the Parish Council and after receipt by the Parish Council of paper receipts in respect of same. Provision of any safety equipment or clothing needs that are identified during the risk assessment process must be authorised in advance by the Parish Council.
- If volunteers are dissatisfied with any aspect of their work or wish to resolve a problem, contact should be made in the first instance with the Clerk to the Parish Council