

**MINUTES OF THE WESTON-IN-GORDANO PARISH
COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN WESTON-IN-GORDANO
VILLAGE HALL AT 7pm ON THURSDAY 4th of DECEMBER 2025**

PRESENT: Councillors: Pete Williams (Chairman), Dav Baulch, Neville Hall, James Luton, Chris Saunders and Steven Sulley.

IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Liz Shayler (Locum Clerk)
WARD COUNCILLOR:	None
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:	Fifteen

Cllr Williams welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Before the meeting was convened, members of the public were invited to speak.

i) Members of the public.

A resident read a prepared submission from the Local Speed Watch Co-ordinator regarding traffic issues along the B3124. Concerns were raised that Avon and Somerset Police had questioned the validity of North Somerset Council's use of GPS data. It was noted that the installation of the Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign was hoped to help reduce vehicle speeds.

Other residents contributed to the discussion and raised the following points:

- A request for the technical reasoning behind the positioning of the VAS sign. It was explained that the sign was capable of facing either direction.
- Concern that the 30mph signage was obscured, potentially contributing to vehicles speeding through the 20mph zone.
- A query as to whether a highways safety application submitted in 2023 had been progressed.
- The apparent discrepancy between the current 400m length of the 20mph zone and the understanding that a minimum length of 600m was required.
- Concerns regarding the lack of pavements along the route.

The Clerk explained North Somerset Council's position as far as possible at the meeting and advised that she would seek further clarification and endeavour to obtain responses to the questions raised.

ii) Ward Councillor's Report.

No Ward Councillor was present, and no report had been received. The Clerk informed the Council that she would send Cllr Ashton the calendar of meeting dates, in the hope that he would be able to attend future Parish Council meetings.

The meeting was convened.

25/66 To receive apologies for absence (agenda item 1).

Apologies were received from Cllr Ian Holding.

25/67 To receive members' declarations of interest on any agenda item (agenda item 2)

No interests were declared.

25/68 To approve as a correct record, the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th of November 2025 (agenda item 3)

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 6th of November 2025.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

The minutes of the meeting were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25/69 To sign the contract for locum Clerk, Liz Shayler, for up to 6 hours a week until the appointment of a permanent Clerk (agenda item 4).

Resolved: to sign the contract for locum Clerk, Liz Shayler, for up to 6 hours a week until the appointment of a permanent Clerk.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

25/70 To note the training and events available and agree any attendance (agenda item 5)

- i) **At your place ALCA Essential Council Training, 18:15 – 20:15 either January 15th, 20th or 22nd, £225.**

Resolved: to agree to hold at your place ALCA Essential Council Training on January 22nd, 2026, at a cost of £225.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

- ii) **ALCA events and training from £30 each**
- iii) **ALCA e-learning on nimble £14 each**
- iv) **Breakthrough Communications Training via ALCA**
- v) **Various 'Scribe' Finance FREE Training**
- vi) **Various ALCA supported finance training via ALCA £30 each**
- vii) **Various NALC training from £30 each**

The training above was noted.

25/71 To receive the Clerk's report/Exchange of information (agenda item 6)

- i) **Weeds along the B3124**
The weed-removal work scheduled for the week of 10th November 2025 was delayed due to flooding across North Somerset, which has pulled teams away from non-essential work. It is hoped that the contractor will return shortly.
- ii) **Update on progression of new website**
The council were told the new website was under construction.
- iii) **Update on progression of Unity Bank Account**
The bank mandate is ready for signing by all nominated signatories. Unity Trust Bank has advised using the Clerk's home address temporarily until a village-based address is formally registered. Once the account is open, the Clerk will make the £50 setup payment, to be added to her invoice in the new year.
- iv) **New Village Agent for Weston-in-Gordano**
A new Village Agent has been appointed to support residents. They will help signpost services, attend community events where possible, and work with the Parish Council to identify local needs.

25/72 To consider potentially funding traffic and pedestrian safety measures in the village (agenda item 7).

The Council received a report from the Clerk outlining possible pedestrian safety measures within the village. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the merits of introducing additional measures across the village and the various forms these could take.

Resolved: to authorise the Clerk to submit a request through NSC's Highways "One Front Door" system stating that the Parish Council is concerned about the speed through the village and is prepared, in principle, to consider contributing to future traffic management measures for example extended 20mph limit, village gateways, priority lines / signs, bollards as you enter the village.

Resolved: that the Clerk submits a formal request to NSC for traffic and pedestrian monitoring to assess the suitability of a pedestrian crossing, identifying the most appropriate location and monitoring times.

Resolved: that the Clerk submits a further request through NSC's Highways "One Front Door" system for a safe pedestrian crossing between the bus stops, confirming that the Parish Council is prepared, in principle, to consider contributing to this scheme.

Resolved: that the Clerk submit a further request through North Somerset Council's Highways "One Front Door" system for safe pedestrian routes throughout the settlement boundary, whether through the creation of new footpaths or the widening of existing footpaths to 1.2 metres, where possible.

The resolutions were correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

25/73 To agree a replacement of missing Parish Council laptop (agenda item 8).

The Council discussed the missing laptop and noted that, although it had been purchased by a previous Clerk, it had not been used since its purchase. It was therefore confirmed that no Parish Council data had been stored on the device and, as such, it was considered to present no data protection or security risk to the Council.

Resolved: to record the 2020 Parish Council laptop as missing and update the asset register.

Resolved: to approve the purchase of a new Parish Council-owned laptop for the Clerk, compliant with Windows 11 and current security requirements.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

25/74 To discuss exploring the installation of a post box and the provision of Wi-Fi at Weston-in-Gordano Village Hall (agenda item 9).

The Clerk informed the Council that, in the presence of Cllrs Williams and Holding, the Parish Council documents had been removed from the Village Hall due to them being unsecured. It was therefore suggested that any decision on the removal of the filing cupboard be deferred until the New Year, once the Clerk has reviewed the documents and assessed what must be retained. The Clerk confirmed that no documentation would be destroyed without informing the Council.

A lengthy discussion was held on this. It was agreed to defer this item and that at the next meeting Councillors would bring IT equipment to trial getting Wi-Fi to the Village Hall and the Clerk would investigate installing a letterbox in the Parish Council owned phone box.

25/75 To agree a Parish Council logo for use on all Parish Councils documents (agenda item 10).

Resolved: that the Council adopt the agreed logo design for use on all Parish Council documents. It was further agreed that the colour of the logo may be adapted for different purposes, such as use on the website or letterheads.



The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous).

25/76 To approve the following documents (agenda item 11).

i) Calendar of Meeting dates

Resolved – To agree the calendar of meeting dates with the Parish Council meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7pm from January 2026.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

- ii) **Artificial Intelligence Policy**
- iii) **Assets Management Policy**
- iv) **Asset Disposal Procedure**
- v) **Internal Controls Audit Plan**
- vi) **Investment Strategy and Policy**
- vii) **Reserves Policy**
- viii) **Volunteer Policy**

Resolved: to agree the documents above.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

25/77 To authorise bills for payment for December (agenda item 12).

Resolved: to authorise the bills for payment for December of £50.02. Cllr Holding and Cllr Baulch to authorise the cheque payments.

The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous)

25/78 To note the Parish Council's end of Octobers, bank balance and bank reconciliation (agenda item 13).

The Parish Council's end of October, bank balance and bank reconciliation were noted.

25/79 To note the Parish Council's November 26th budget position (agenda item 14)

The budget update was noted.

25/80 To note the second draft of the 2026/2027 budget (agenda item 15)

The second draft of the Parish Council's 2026/2027 budget was noted. It will be presented for formal approval at the January meeting. Any requests for amendments should be submitted to the Clerk as soon as possible.

25/81 To note the following planning decisions (agenda item 16)

- i) **25/P/1936/TRCA Moor View Clevedon Road Weston-in-Gordano BS20 8PZ.**
The reduction of crown by approx. 1.5m to T1 (Oak) shaping around the house to prevent future damage during wind and remove cross branches. The reduction and maintenance of Apple (T2) by 2m around and in height reducing risk to house and power lines. The reduction of Magnolia (T3) by 2m around and in height. **No objection (tree/hed) unconditional.**
- i) **25/P/2070/ELE Land at Moor View Clevedon Road Weston-in-Gordano BS20 8PZ.**
Notification of National Grid Electricity Distribution intention to raise existing low-service cable utilising 1no. 9m service pole. **PN (Electricity) No objections**

25/82 Dates of the next meetings (agenda item 17)

Thursday 8th January 2026, 7pm Parish Council Meeting at the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:30

.....Chairman

.....Date

Bills for Payment - 7th November to the 30th November 2025
Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Method	Payee	Details	Net	VAT	Gross Amount	Comments	Minute agreed	Power
To Pay								
Chq 951	K & E Property Maintenance	Emptying Dog bins Nov	£ -	£ -	£ -	Aug paid twice		Environment Protection Act 1990 s98(5a) Highways Act 1980 s301
Chq 952	West Mercia Energy	Electricity	£ 41.68	£ 8.34	£ 50.02		07&08 2019	
							25.47	
		Totals	£ 41.68	£ 8.34	£ 50.02			

4. To note the training and events available and agree any attendance.

Each of the agenda items includes a link which you can Ctrl+ click to follow to the relevant page to find out about each set of courses in more detail.

- i) **At your place ALCA Essential Council Training, 18:15 – 20:15 either January 15th, 20th or 22nd, £225.**
I sent out a doodlepol and based on those who have responded we are looking at 2hrs on either the 20th or 22nd of January. The Council need to agree a date because currently ALCA and the Village Hall are endeavouring to save all three dates.
- ii) **ALCA events and training from £15 each** [Upcoming-events](#)
- iii) **ALCA e-learning on nimble up to £14 each** [E-Learning Courses ALCA](#)
- iv) **Breakthrough communications training approx. £30** [Communications Courses ALCA](#)
- v) **Various Scribe finance training (this is our accounting package) Free** [Scribe Training](#)
- vi) **Various finance training £30** [Finance Training ALCA](#)
- vii) **Various NALC training from £32.68** www.nalc.gov.uk/nalc-events

5. To receive the Officer report/Exchange of information: Please note that the Council is unable to make any formal decision under this item.

- i) **New website**
The new website is currently under construction. Link to follow.
- ii) **New Unity Bank Account.**
The bank account has now been set up. Currently three councillors have reported that they access. Unity Bank have been given the details to transfer the balance from Natwest and close the account. It is suggested that the two payees on this months bills for payment to let them know of the switch and that there will be a delay but that moving forward it will be BACs payments. This is because there tends to be a delay in the cheques being cashed and the cheques would risk bouncing.
- iii) **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Update**
Whilst looking through the historic income and expenditure it was noticed that there had been a CIL payment made to the PC but there didn't seem to be any minuted expenditure and the payment hadn't been earmarked. This has now been rectified but North Somerset have confirmed that the £446.91 will need to be spent by April 16th 2026. This will be on the next agenda.
- iv) **Street lighting Update**
The current arrangements for the Street light on Cadbury Lane and the Phone box have been reviewed. They are currently billed to the Parish Council from West Mercia Energy. It has now been established that while the electricity supplies for these lights were historically included under North Somerset Council's corporate energy contract, the columns themselves were not recorded as NSC street lighting assets and therefore did not fall within NSC's inspection or maintenance regime. As such responsibility for safety checks rests with the Parish Council.

It appears the Parish Council may have historically assumed that inclusion within the corporate energy account also meant the lights were subject to routine safety inspections; however, this does not appear to have been the case. NSC has confirmed that the electricity supplies will now be transferred to the Parish Council, allowing the Parish to take full control of the arrangements and seek a more appropriate and cost-effective energy tariff.

Now that responsibility has been clarified, the Clerk will:

- arrange appropriate electrical and structural safety checks,
- ensure the lights are accurately recorded on the Parish asset register, and
- incorporate them into the Parish Council's ongoing street lighting inspection and maintenance regime.
- Look for alternative energy tariffs.

This work represents a clarification and regularisation of a historic arrangement and ensures the Parish Council is meeting its responsibilities going forward.

v) **Street lighting Update**

The items from last month's agenda have been added to one front door. The Clerk has also received information about the submission in 2023 which will be followed up with the Senior Highways Officer.

6. To agree the insurance premium of £444.55 for the 2nd year of the three-year agreement with AJG Insurance.

Having spoken to AJG Insurance it seems that Last January you agreed a three-year deal with them. As such the annual premium this year will be £444.55.

7. To discuss exploring the installation of a Parish Council post box in the phone box outside the White Hart.

Summary: The red telephone kiosk in the village currently houses the community defibrillator and has an active electricity supply, which is paid for by the Parish Council. The Council does not currently have a village-based post box for written correspondence.

There is a possibility that the existing internal shelf within the kiosk could be removed and replaced with a low-profile, fixed post box mounted on the rear wall beneath the defibrillator cabinet. This would reduce clutter, improve emergency access compared with the current arrangement, and make use of otherwise unused space.

In parallel, it is proposed that the Parish Council formally approach North Somerset Council (Street Naming & Numbering) and Royal Mail to explore whether the kiosk could be recognised as an official delivery address for Parish Council correspondence.

While registration of a defibrillator kiosk as a delivery point is unconventional, it is considered that there is a reasonable case, noting that:

- The kiosk is a permanent structure with a live electricity supply billed to the Parish Council
- The Parish Council would be the named occupier and responsible for mail collection
- Removal of the existing shelf would improve, rather than reduce, emergency access
- Any post box would be securely fixed, low-profile, and would not obstruct defibrillator use

Approaching both organisations would allow the Council to establish whether a post box could operate as a registered delivery address.

Recommendation

That the Parish Council:

- Approves the removal of the internal shelf from the red telephone kiosk to improve access and reduce clutter; and
- Authorises the Clerk to approach North Somerset Council and Royal Mail to seek advice on the registration of the telephone kiosk as an official delivery address for Parish Council correspondence, with findings reported back to Council.

8. To discuss the historic paperwork and decide what should be destroyed, archived at the Archives Centre in Taunton, kept within current parish documents.

Two filing cabinets of historic Parish Council documentation were previously stored in the Village Hall in an unsecured location. In the presence of Cllrs Williams and Holding, these documents were removed to ensure their security. The Council was advised and it was agreed that any decision regarding their long-term retention or disposal should be deferred until the New Year to allow the Clerk to review the records and assess what must be retained.

The Clerk confirmed at that time that no documentation would be destroyed without prior Council approval. A full review of the paperwork has now been completed, and the documents have been assessed in line with statutory requirements, data protection considerations, and best practice for local authority records management.

In reviewing the historic Parish Council records, I have applied the Parish Council's adopted Document Retention Policy, together with guidance from the Local Government Act 1972, Data Protection legislation, and recognised sector guidance (including NALC / SLCC best practice).

Documents have been assessed against the following principles:

- Whether the document is statutorily required to be retained
- Whether the document has ongoing legal, financial, or administrative value
- Whether the document has been superseded, duplicated, or is publicly available elsewhere

- Whether the document contains personal data that is no longer necessary to retain, presenting a GDPR risk
- Whether the document has historical significance and is suitable for deposit with the Somerset Archives and Local Studies Centre (Taunton)

Where documents fall outside statutory retention periods, are duplicated in official records (for example where minutes form the primary legal record), or are clearly obsolete, they have been placed in the category proposed for destruction, subject to Council approval.

Summary of Document Categories

1. Documents Proposed for Destruction

(Superseded, duplicated, out of date, or beyond statutory retention periods)

- Conditions of Service for Clerks (1996) & Local Government Pensions (1995) – superseded
- Attendance Registers 2007–2019 (minutes form the official register; registers include signatures and present a GDPR risk)
- Postage & Expenses Register 2017–2019 (duplicated in cash book)
- Planning Applications 1995–2008 (available electronically from North Somerset Council)
- Local Plan Correspondence 1987–1992 (superseded twice)
- NatWest Bank Statements pre-2017 (retention period exceeded)
- Standing Orders 1988–1991 (superseded)
- Receipts & Payments 1969–1983 (retention period exceeded)
- Hinkley Point General Correspondence (2014)
- Electoral Register 2019 (new complete register issued annually)
- Gordano Valley Sewage Scheme correspondence (out of date)
- ALCA Updates 1995–2005 (out of date)
- Joint Local Authorities Emergency Manual (incomplete and superseded)
- “Cutting Crime in Rural Areas” leaflet (1996, photocopied and out of date)
- *Milestones* Newsletter (2000 – produced for one year only)
- Accounts 2015–2016 (retention period exceeded)
- NSC / Parish Council Charter (2005 – superseded)
- Changes to the Licensing Act (2003 – available online)
- Miscellaneous correspondence of no ongoing relevance, including:
free flowers (2019); Police Liaison Officer (2017); Truespeed (2018); filing cabinet relocation correspondence (1997 & 1999); bus services (1997 & 1999); millennium correspondence (1999); dog fouling (1996); Annual Assembly thank-you letters (1997–1999); NSC logo correspondence; flooding (1999); NSC owned streetlighting correspondence (various 1990s).

2. Documents Proposed for Archiving

(Somerset Archives and Local Studies Centre, Taunton)

- Definitive Map
- Parish Council Minutes 1991–2001
- Parish Council Minutes 2010–2021
- Parish Assembly Minutes 1991–2019

3. Documents Requiring a Council Decision

- Neighbourhood Watch Records 2006–2015 (not listed in data audit)
- Fowler’s Tip correspondence (various dates 1986–1994)
- Black Rock Quarry correspondence 1987–1991
- Tree Warden Scheme correspondence (2015 – Roy Betts)

4. Documents to Be Retained Within Current Parish Records

- Accounts 2017–2018
- Accounts 2018–2019
- Accounts 2019–2020
- Accounts 2020–2021
- Accounts 2022–2023
- Accounts 2023–2024
- Accounts 2024–2025
- Cash Book 1986–2019 (*statutory retention – required for the next two years*)
- Middle Hill Common – various documents

- Village Green – various documents
- Phone Box records
- Cadbury Lane Streetlight records
- Speedwatch / B2134 correspondence

Recommendation

Council to:

1. Approve the destruction of documents listed in Section 1
2. Approve the transfer of documents listed in Section 2 to the Somerset Archives
3. Determine the appropriate treatment of documents listed in Section 3
4. Note the documents to be retained within current Parish Council records and agree where they should be held.

9. To approve the following documents

The following eleven documents have been prepared by the Locum Clerk. They are based on templates used in Banwell and national model documents, including examples from other Quality and Gold-level councils, but have been adapted to reflect the specific practices and procedures of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council. They are not set in stone and can be amended by the Council at any time, although each document also includes a maximum review period.

i) Appraisal Policy

This policy sets out a clear, fair, and consistent framework for the appraisal of the Clerk. It reflects best practice for parish councils, supports professional development, and provides appropriate governance arrangements for employment matters. The policy has been drafted in anticipation of the appointment of a new Clerk and the establishment of an Employment Committee, and ensures that appraisal arrangements are clear, proportionate, and future-proofed.

ii) Complaints Procedure

The policy sets out how complaints about the Parish Council's administration, procedures, services, and decisions will be handled, and clarifies which matters fall outside the Council's jurisdiction. Adoption of the policy will provide transparency for residents and a clear, consistent framework for managing complaints.

iii) Scheme of Delegation

This sets out the delegated authority of the Clerk, acting as Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, to manage the day-to-day administration of the Council and to act in urgent or emergency situations in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Adoption of the Scheme will provide clarity, resilience, and continuity of decision-making between meetings.

iv) Dignity at Work / Antbullying & Harassment Policy

This sets out Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council's approach to preventing and addressing bullying and harassment and is based on the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) model template. While not a single standalone statutory policy, it supports the Council's legal duties as an employer under employment, health and safety, and equality legislation, and reflects recognised best practice. Adoption of this policy will provide a clear framework for promoting dignity and respect in the workplace and in the conduct of Council business.

v) Disciplinary Procedure inc. Hearing Procedure

This policy sets out Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure for employees and is based on the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) model template. While not prescribed as a single standalone statute, the procedure gives effect to the Council's statutory duties as an employer under employment and equality legislation and reflects the requirements of the ACAS Code of Practice. Adoption of this policy provides a clear, fair, and lawful framework for managing conduct and performance issues and helps protect both the employee and the Council.

vi) Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy sets out the Council's commitment to equality, dignity, and fairness in employment. It reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and aligns with best practice and model guidance for local councils. Members are asked to consider and adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy as part of the Council's employment and governance framework.

vii) Expenses – Travel & Subsistence Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for the reimbursement of travelling, subsistence, and other approved expenses incurred by councillors and employees while undertaking authorised duties on behalf of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council. The policy is based on the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and relevant NALC guidance, and has been adapted for adoption by Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council to ensure clarity, consistency, and proper financial governance.

viii) Grievance Policy

This policy sets out Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council's Grievance Procedure for employees and is based on the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) model template. The procedure supports the Council's statutory obligations as an employer to provide a fair mechanism for employees to raise and resolve workplace concerns and is aligned with the ACAS Code of Practice. Adoption of this policy ensures grievances are handled consistently, fairly, and in accordance with employment law and best practice.

ix) Homeworking & Lone working Policy

This policy formalises existing working arrangements, recognising that the Clerk is the Council's sole employee and works primarily from home and alone. It sets out clear, proportionate arrangements relating to lone working, health and safety, data protection, equipment, and allowances, and ensures that appropriate safeguards are in place in line with governance and employment best practice.

x) Sickness Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for managing sickness absence for the Clerk and ensures the Council meets its employment obligations. It has been tailored to reflect the Council's size and the fact that it has a single employee working primarily from home, while providing clear and proportionate procedures for reporting, managing and reviewing sickness absence.

WESTON-IN-GORDANO PARISH COUNCIL

Appraisal Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council's approach to the appraisal of its Clerk. It provides a structured, fair, and transparent framework to support performance, professional development, and alignment with Council priorities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Clerk to the Council. The Council currently employs one member of staff.

3. Principles

The appraisal process will be:

- fair and objective
- consistent and transparent
- confidential
- forward-looking and developmental
- supportive of professional growth

4. Appraisal Responsibility

The Clerk will be appraised by the Employment Committee, once established, acting on behalf of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council. Until such time as an Employment Committee is formally appointed, appraisal arrangements will be determined by resolution of Full Council and undertaken by a small Appraisal Panel of councillors appointed for that purpose.

Councillors involved in the appraisal process must not participate in any appeal relating to that appraisal. Where appropriate, structured feedback may be sought from councillors, contractors, or other relevant stakeholders. Any feedback will be proportionate, professional, and focused on role-related performance.

5. Appraisal Objectives

The appraisal process aims to:

- review performance and workload
- recognise achievements and strengths
- identify areas for improvement
- agree objectives and priorities
- identify training and development needs

6. Appraisal Process

6.1 Frequency

Appraisals will normally take place every six months, usually in March and September, unless otherwise agreed by Council.

6.2 Preparation

Both the appraisers and the Clerk will prepare in advance. The following documents should be available:

- job description
- previous appraisal records (if any)
- previously agreed objectives

6.3 The Appraisal Meeting

The appraisal meeting will:

- take place in a private, interruption-free setting
- be informal but structured
- encourage open, two-way discussion
- focus on performance, development, and future objectives

6.4 Assessment

Performance will be assessed as Satisfactory, or Requiring Improvement, supported by written narrative.

6.5 Documentation

A written appraisal record will be completed and shared with the Clerk as soon as practicable following the appraisal. The Clerk will have the opportunity to add comments before signing the document.

6.6 Records

Signed appraisal documents will be retained securely within confidential personnel records.

6.7 Follow-Up

The appraisers are responsible for ensuring that agreed actions and development activities are progressed.

7. Interim Reviews

Interim reviews may be held following completion of a significant project or where Council priorities change materially. Formal appraisal paperwork is not required, but any agreed actions should be recorded.

8. Training and Development

Training and development needs will be identified jointly and linked to the Clerk's role and Council objectives.

The GROW model may be used to structure discussions:

- Goals – What is to be achieved?
- Reality – What is the current situation?
- Options – What options are available?
- Way Forward – What actions will be taken?

9. Unsatisfactory Performance

Where performance concerns are identified, an action plan will be agreed. If performance does not improve despite reasonable support and training, the Council's disciplinary procedure may be invoked. A disciplinary process is not an automatic outcome of a poor appraisal.

10. Confidentiality

Appraisal records are confidential and will only be accessible to the Clerk and those formally involved in the appraisal or appeal process. Council will be informed that an appraisal has taken place, but not of its content.

11. Objective Setting

Objectives should:

- reflect the Clerk's role and Council priorities
- be limited in number (normally 6–8)
- include at least one professional development objective

Objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timed.

12. Appendix and use of Appraisal Form

The appraisal forms included in the appendices form part of this policy and are to be used as follows:

Sections 1 and 2 of the appraisal form are completed after the Clerk's first six months in post, and are used to support the end of probation review and confirmation of appointment.

Sections 3 and 4 are used for all subsequent appraisals and review meetings following completion of the probation period.

This approach ensures that the initial appraisal appropriately focuses on induction, suitability for the role, and confirmation of appointment, while later appraisals focus on ongoing performance, objectives, and professional development.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Dec 2025
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

WESTON-IN-GORDANO PARISH COUNCIL

FIRST APPRAISAL FORM

SECTION 1

NAME: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME OF APPRAISER: _____

Section 2 was completed at the interview by xxxxxx and then checked and signed by xxxx.

SECTION 2

1. How do you feel you have contributed to the smooth running of the council?
2. What do you feel have been your main achievements?
3. What do you feel have been your main areas of difficulty?
4. How could these be overcome?
5. What particular strengths do you feel you have and to what extent are they being used?
6. What weaknesses, if any, do you have in fulfilling the responsibilities of your job?
7. How would you assess your own ability to be organised and get things done?
8. How would you describe your relationship with the councillors?
9. What do you like most and least about your job?
10. How challenging do you find your current position?
11. Do you have any capabilities or interests which you feel might be better used than at present?
12. In what areas do you think you could improve your performance?
13. What changes do you think could be made to alleviate any difficulties, weaknesses and pressure and enable you to use your strengths to make your job more enjoyable/challenging?
14. Do you feel that we provide enough assistance to help you develop?
15. What do you see yourself doing within
 - a) the next 2 years?
 - b) the next 5 years?
16. What do you feel could prevent you from achieving the above?
17. Chose four / five objectives from your job description which you would like to work on in the next year?
18. What training is needed to help you work on these?
19. Are there any additional points in respect to your job which you would like to discuss?

WESTON-IN-GORDANO PARISH COUNCIL

SECTION 3: ACTION PLAN FOR

NAME: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME OF APPRAISER: _____

1. KEY WORK TARGETS FOR NEXT SIX MONTHS

2. NEW RESPONSIBILITIES (if any)

3. ADDITIONAL ACTION POINTS (if any)

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
NEEDS

OBJECTIVE(S)

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

REVIEW DATE: _____

CLERK'S SIGNATURE DATE

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE DATE

Issue a copy of whole appraisal to the employee and employment file. Issue a copy of Section 3 to the Employment Committee. Set the next review date, depending on the information above.

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council
APPRAISAL REVIEW FORM

NAME: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME AND TITLE OF LINE MANAGER: _____

1. REVIEW OF KEY WORK TARGETS

ADDITIONAL / NEXT TARGETS SET

2. REVIEW OF NEW RESPONSIBILITIES/ADDITIONAL ACTION POINTS (if any)

3. REVIEW OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

<u>ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS SET</u>	
<u>NEEDS</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE(S)</u>

4. COMMENTS (EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE AND OR EMPLOYEE)

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE DATE

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE DATE

Issue a copy of section 4 to the employee, Chairman of the Employment Committee and employment file;
set the next review date, depending on the information above.

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Complaints Procedure for External Complaints

1. Introduction

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council is committed to providing a high standard of service to the community. We recognise, however, that from time-to-time individuals may feel that the Council has fallen short of this standard. This procedure sets out how complaints may be made and how they will be handled.

2. Scope of this Procedure

This procedure applies to complaints about the administrative actions, procedures, services, or decisions of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council. This procedure does not apply to:

- **Complaints about the conduct of individual Parish Councillors**, which are dealt with under the Members' Code of Conduct by North Somerset Council.
- **Complaints relating to Parish Council staff**, which are managed internally as employment matters in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policies.

Complaints that fall outside the scope of this procedure will be redirected to the appropriate body.

3. Initial Procedure

The complainant will be asked to submit their complaint, relating to the Council's procedures or administration, in writing to the Parish Clerk. A record of the complaint will be maintained by the Clerk. If the complainant does not wish to submit their complaint to the Parish Clerk, it may instead be addressed to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Parish Clerk or Chairman shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days. In the first instance, the complaint will be investigated by the Chairman of the Parish Council or, where established and appropriate, the Chairman of the Employment Committee. This investigation will normally be completed and the complainant notified of the outcome within twenty-one working days. Where appropriate, Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council shall issue a written apology to the complainant, signed by the Chairman of the Council.

4. Escalation to a Hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation, they have the right to request that their complaint be considered by a Complaints Hearing Panel, appointed by the Parish Council for this purpose. Any councillor with a conflict of interest shall not take part and will be substituted as necessary. If a hearing is requested:

- The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and may be accompanied or represented if they wish.
- The complainant must provide the Council with copies of any documentation or evidence they wish to rely upon at least seven working days prior to the meeting.
- The Parish Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation it intends to rely upon.

5. Procedure at the Hearing

The Council shall first consider whether the circumstances require the exclusion of the public and press. The hearing shall follow this procedure:

- The Chairman introduces those present.
- The Chairman outlines the procedure to be followed.
- The complainant (or their representative) presents their complaint.
- Members may ask questions of the complainant.
- If relevant, the Parish Clerk presents the Council's position.
- Members may ask questions of the Parish Clerk.
- Both the Parish Clerk and the complainant are offered the opportunity to make a final statement (in that order).
- Both parties withdraw while Members deliberate. If clarification is required, both parties may be invited back.
- Both parties return to hear the decision, or will be advised when and how the decision will be communicated.

6. After the Hearing

The decision of the Parish Council shall be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken. Any decision on a complaint shall be reported at a Parish Council meeting, in public, without breaching confidentiality.

7. Complaints Outside This Procedure

Complaints about Parish Councillors

Complaints regarding the conduct of Parish Councillors are subject to the jurisdiction of North Somerset Council's Standards arrangements. Such complaints should be made to the Monitoring Officer at North Somerset Council.

Complaints about Parish Council Staff

Complaints relating to Parish Council staff will be treated as employment matters and handled internally in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policies. While details of such matters remain confidential, complainants can be assured that appropriate action will be taken where required.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Dec 2025
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Scheme of Delegation

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Clerk to the Council (including any duly appointed Locum Clerk), acting as Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed below.

All delegated authority is exercised in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and any directions given by the Council from time to time.

1. Responsible Financial Officer – Duties and Powers

The Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Council and shall be responsible for the Council's accounting procedures, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

2. Proper Officer – Duties and Powers

The Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and is authorised to:

- Receive declarations of acceptance of office
- Receive and record notices disclosing interests at meetings
- Receive and retain plans and documents
- Sign notices, agreements, licences, or other documents on behalf of the Council where authorised
- Receive copies of by-laws made by another local authority
- Certify copies of by-laws made by the Council
- Sign and issue summonses to attend meetings of the Council
- Keep proper records of all Council meetings
- Notify the Returning Officer of any casual vacancies and liaise regarding the conduct of elections

In addition, the Clerk has delegated authority to undertake the following on behalf of the Council:

- Day-to-day administration of Council services, including routine inspection and control
- Authorisation of routine expenditure within approved budgets
- Emergency or necessary expenditure up to **£1,000** outside of the agreed budget (see Section 3)
- Dealing with press and public relations on behalf of the Council, in consultation with the Chairman (or, if appointed, the Vice-Chairman)
- Liaison with North Somerset Council and Parish Council contractors on clear, uncontentious matters raised by members of the public or councillors, without prior referral to a Council agenda
- Decisions on whether items are appropriate for publication on the Council's website.

Where required, monthly payments will be prepared by the Clerk and circulated electronically to all Councillors for approval. Invoices will be provided to the Councillors authorised to undertake online bank authorisation. All payments made under this process shall be reported to the next meeting of the Council for formal ratification.

3. Urgent Matters

In the event of any matter arising which requires an urgent decision beyond the delegated powers in Section 2, the Clerk, in consultation with:

- the Chairman (or, if appointed, the Vice-Chairman), or
- if this is not possible, two members of the Parish Council

shall have delegated authority to act on behalf of the Council in respect of the matter under consideration.

Before exercising these powers, the members consulted shall consider whether the issue is of sufficient significance to warrant the calling of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council. Whenever any action is taken under this section, full details of the circumstances and the action taken shall be reported in writing to the next available meeting of the Council.

4. National or Local Emergency / Lockdown

In the event of a national or local emergency, or circumstances affecting the Council's ability to operate normally, the Clerk, in consultation with:

- the Chairman (or, if appointed, the Vice-Chairman), or
- if this is not possible, two members of the Parish Council

shall have delegated authority to act on behalf of the Council in the interests of health, safety, and business continuity.

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

This includes:

- Emergency or necessary expenditure up to **£3,000** outside of the agreed budget
- Temporary suspension of Standing Orders where required for health and safety or business continuity reasons.

All actions taken under this section shall be notified to Councillors by email as soon as practicable and summarised at the next meeting of the Council.

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0.1	Initial draft	LS	Dec 2025
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Dignity at Work / Bullying & Harassment Policy

Purpose and Scope

Statement

In support of our value to respect others Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of its employees, officials, members, contractors, visitors to the council or members of the public from the community which we serve. The council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace.

This policy reflects the spirit in which the council intends to undertake all of its business and outlines the specific procedures available to all employees in order to protect them from bullying and harassment. It should be read in conjunction with the council's policies on Grievance and Disciplinary handling, the Members Code of Conduct and the Civility and Respect Pledge.

This policy along with the Civility and Respect Pledge will be made available to all employees as part of their induction and to all Members as part of their Welcome Pack. The council may also wish to share this policy with contractors, visitors and members of the public.

Definitions

Bullying - "Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse of this use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress."

Harassment - "unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment." This usually covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age.

These definitions are derived from the ACAS guidance on the topic. Bullying and Harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient. They are generally evidenced by a pattern of conduct, rather than being related to one-off incidents. Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, mental health issues, lack of respect for others, turnover, damage to the council's reputation and ultimately, legal proceedings against the council and payment of legal fees and potentially unlimited compensation.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows; (this list is not exhaustive)

Spreading malicious rumours, insulting someone, ridiculing or demeaning someone, exclusion or victimisation, unfair treatment, overbearing supervision or other misuse of position or power, unwelcome sexual advances, making threats about job security, making threats of physical violence against a person or their family, deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading work and/or constant criticism, blaming a person for others' mistakes, preventing an individual's promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment may occur face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including electronic communication such as e-mail or on social media, by telephone or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.

Penalties

Bullying and harassment by any employed persons can be considered examples of gross misconduct which will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure at Gross Misconduct level and may result in summary dismissal from the council. If elected/co-opted Members are bullying or harassing employees, contractors, fellow councillors or others, then a referral through the Standards process in place at the time, reported as a contravention of the Member's Code of Conduct, could be an appropriate measure.

If an employee is experiencing bullying or harassment from a third party, the council will act reasonably in upholding its duty of care towards its own employees.

In extreme cases harassment can constitute a criminal offence and the council should take appropriate legal advice, often available from the council's insurer, if such a matter arises.

The Legal Position

Councils have a duty of care towards all their workers and liability under common law arising out of the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. If an employer fails to act reasonably with regard to this duty of care by allowing bullying or harassment to continue unchallenged an employee may decide to resign and claim 'constructive dismissal' at an Employment Tribunal.

Under the Equality Act 2010 bullying or harassment related to one of the protected characteristics covered by the Act (age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, belief, colour, disability) can be considered unlawful discrimination which could lead to an Employment Tribunal claim for discrimination against the corporate employer, the council and the perpetrator(s) as individuals named Respondents.

In addition, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and Protection from Harassment Act 1997 created a criminal offence of harassment with a fine and/or prison sentence as a penalty and a right to damages for the victim. A harasser may be personally liable to pay damages if a victim complains to an Employment Tribunal on the grounds of discrimination.

The 1997 Act was originally designed to assist in stalking situations but case law has demonstrated that it can be relevant to employment disputes, for instance; employers can be vicariously liable for harassment received in the workplace, that the conduct is viewed as 'serious', or 'oppressive and unacceptable', that a 'course of conduct' needs to be established but that this can link incidents which are separated by long time periods and that damages for personal injury and distress can be awarded under the Act.

Process for dealing with complaints of Bullying and Harassment

Informal approach

Anyone; employee, contractor, member or visitor, who feels he or she is being bullied or harassed should try to resolve the problem informally, in the first instance. It may be sufficient to explain to the person(s) involved in the unwanted behaviour, or an intermediary, that their conduct is unacceptable, offensive or causing discomfort.

Anyone concerned about being bullied or harassed is encouraged to maintain a journal or other record of the incidents.

Formal approach

Employees: Where the employee feels unable to resolve the matter informally any complaint about harassment or bullying can be raised confidentially and informally, initially with the Chair of the Parish Council, or another Councillor if more appropriate. Where an Employment Committee has been established, the matter may be referred to the Chair of that Committee. It may be appropriate for the complaint to be put in writing after the initial discussion, as this will enable the formal Grievance Procedure to be invoked. The employee will be expected to provide evidence of the conduct about which s/he is complaining.

Others: Any other party to the council, other than an employee, who feels he or she is being bullied or harassed should raise their complaint with the council, where possible, if an informal notification to the alleged perpetrator has been unsuccessful at eliminating the problem. The complaint should then be investigated and a meeting held to discuss the facts and recommend the way forward. A member of the public who feels they have been bullied or harassed by any Members or officers of a council should use the council's official Complaints Procedure. It is important that the Officer(s) or Member(s) being complained about do not prevent the council operating impartially in its investigation and decision making in this regard.

Grievance – Employees only

A meeting to discuss the complaint with the aggrieved party will normally be arranged within five working days of a written complaint being received and will be held under the provisions of the council's Grievance Procedure. This meeting will be to discuss the issues raised and a way forward for the member(s) of staff involved. Employees have a right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at

this meeting. A full investigation of the complaint will be held by an officer, or other duly appointed person, as appointed by the Employment Committee where established. The Employment Committee may find it appropriate for an external investigator to be involved in order to maintain objectivity and impartiality.

The Hearing Panel will publish its recommendations following deliberation of the facts. An action plan should be made available to the aggrieved employee to demonstrate how the problem is to be resolved. If it is decided that mediation or some other intervention is required the council will contact NALC, an employer's body or ACAS for advice.

The employee will have a right of appeal in accordance with the council's separate Appeals Procedure. At all times, the confidentiality of the grievance will be of paramount importance in order to maintain trust in the process. Hence, details of the full grievance will not be shared with the full council without prior approval by the aggrieved party and only after the grievance has been considered by the Employment Committee and, where applicable, any Appeals Panel. The council will commit not to victimise the aggrieved for raising the complaint once the appropriate dispute resolution process has been concluded.

Disciplinary Action

Following a Grievance Hearing or investigation into allegations of bullying or harassment a full report will be made to all parties and this may result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator of the alleged action/behaviour.

For an Employee found to have been bullying/harassing others this will follow the council's Disciplinary Procedure under the ACAS Code of Practice and would normally be treated as Gross Misconduct. For Members who the council reasonably believe have been bullying or harassing another person(s) whilst undertaking council activities the range of sanctions available to the council are limited and must be reasonable, proportionate and not intended to be punitive.

In some cases, counselling or training in appropriate skill areas (e.g. interpersonal communication, assertiveness, chairmanship) may be more appropriate than a penalty. Sanctions may include: admonishment, issuing an apology or giving an undertaking not to repeat the behaviour, removal from committee(s) where direct contact with the employee would take place, or removal of representation on outside bodies. A referral under the Code of Conduct to the relevant reviewing body is usually an appropriate step. A referral to the Police under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 may also be appropriate in more extreme cases.

False or malicious allegations

False or malicious allegations of harassment or bullying which damage the reputation of a fellow employee or Member will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as serious misconduct under the Disciplinary Procedure or a referral to the Standards process.

Responsibilities

All parties to the council have a responsibility to ensure that their conduct towards others does not harass or bully or in any way demean the dignity of others. If unacceptable behaviour is observed, individuals are encouraged to challenge the perpetrator and ask them to stop. There needs to be agreement about how "robust people management" and "bullying" differ; effective management of performance will usually include feedback based on objective evidence, delivered by the Employment Committee where established.

The council undertakes to make this policy and the Civility and Respect Pledge available to all members and workers and requests that each party signs to demonstrate acceptance of its terms. The Council will undertake to ensure that its members and workers are trained in the processes required by this policy as deemed appropriate.

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0.3			

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Disciplinary Procedure for Employees

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all Council employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct whilst at work or when representing the Council. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all employees. This procedure is prepared in accordance with the dismissal and dispute resolution procedures as set out in the Employment Act 2008 and the ACAS Code of Practice (April 2009) and its relevant amendments. This procedure will apply to all employees unless it conflicts with contractual or statutory requirements, which will take precedence. It will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and its relevant amendments.

PRINCIPLES

- a) No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated.
- b) At every stage in the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against them and will be given the opportunity to state their case before any decision is made.
- c) At all formal stages, the employee will have the right to be accompanied by an agreed nominated representative (other than a solicitor / legal representative) or trade union representative during the disciplinary interview.
- d) No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct when the penalty of dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice may be applied.
- e) An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.
- f) The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

THE PROCEDURE FOR MISCONDUCT and GROSS MISCONDUCT

The following list provides examples of misconduct which will normally give rise to formal disciplinary action:

- Unauthorised absence from work
- Persistent short-term and/or frequent absences from work without a medical reason
- Lateness for work or poor time keeping.
- Inappropriate standard of dress
- Minor breaches of Health and Safety or other Council rules or procedures
- Failure to perform your job to the standard expected or in line with your job description/objectives.
- Time wasting
- Disruptive behaviour
- Misuse of the council's facilities (e.g., telephones, computers, email or the internet)
- Refusal to carry out reasonable requests or instructions.
- Smoking in unauthorised areas
- Failure to follow an agreed council procedure.
- Failure to notify the Council of a criminal conviction or charge.

This list is not exhaustive, and offences of a similar nature will result in disciplinary action being instigated N.B. persistent or frequent absence on medical grounds and long-term sickness absence will be dealt with using a procedure for Incapacity.

The following list provides examples of offences which are normally regarded as **gross misconduct**:

- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, or other acts of dishonesty
- Fighting, assault on another person
- Deliberate damage to property of the council, its workers, or members
- Gross incompetence in the conduct of work.

- Failure to act on the findings of a disciplinary procedure or outcome in the case of misconduct being found.
- Gross negligence which results in the council or employees being put at risk.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or excessive alcohol
- Acts of incitement towards or actual acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation including on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, or belief.
- Serious acts of insubordination
- Serious breach of duty to keep information of the council, its service providers, and its clients confidential.
- Unauthorised entry to computer records
- Serious breach of the council's Health & Safety Policy, or Acceptable Usage Policy
- Any action, whether committed on or off the premises, that is likely to or does bring the council into disrepute.
- Serious negligence which causes or might cause significant loss, damage or injury
- Accepting bribes or incentive payments from suppliers
- Unauthorised use of Parish Council funds or credit
- Working with an external agency to provide information which would be detrimental to and cause commercial risk to the council.
- Failure to notify the Council of a conviction for an indictable offence.

This list is not exhaustive. Gross misconduct is conduct which fundamentally undermines the trust and confidence inherent in the employment relationship.

1 INFORMAL ACTION

Minor misconduct will normally be dealt with informally through a confidential one-to-one meeting between the employee and a representative of the Council, normally a member of the Employment Committee where established. Where the Clerk is the subject of the allegation, the matter will be handled discreetly by Members appointed for that purpose. If informal action does not result in improvement, or where the matter is more serious, the formal procedure will be used. Any Member involved in informal resolution will take no further part in any subsequent investigation, disciplinary hearing, or appeal

2 FORMAL ACTION

2.1 The level of warning issued will depend on the seriousness of the misconduct and the employee's previous conduct. In cases of alleged gross misconduct, the procedure may commence at Stage 4.

2.2 Disciplinary Letters

A disciplinary letter will set out:

- The allegation(s)
- Why the conduct is unacceptable
- The stage of the procedure being invoked
- The right to be accompanied
- The time, date and venue of the meeting
- Any documentation to be relied upon

Where Stage 4 is invoked, the letter will warn that dismissal may be an outcome.

2.3 Disciplinary Meetings

Meetings will be arranged within 14 days and held privately. At the meeting the Chair of the Employment Committee (or another appointed Member who has not been involved in the investigation) will state the complaint. The employee may ask questions, present evidence and call witnesses (with prior notice). Failure to attend without good reason may result in the meeting proceeding in the employee's absence.

2.4 Outcomes and Penalties of Formal Action

Stage 1 - Verbal Warning

In the instance of a first complaint that conduct does not meet acceptable standards, the employee will normally be given a formal VERBAL WARNING. They will be advised of;

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

- the reason for the warning,
- that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure,
- the improvement that is required and the timescales for achieving this improvement,
- a review date and any support available (where applicable) and
- their right of appeal.

A brief note of the verbal warning will be kept but it will be removed from the council's records after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct of the employee over the six month period.
out

Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the offence is a serious one, or if further to previous formal disciplinary action, a WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee by the employment committee chairman. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept on file but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months' subject to satisfactory conduct.

Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

If there is still a failure, by the employee, to improve and conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, or the misconduct is sufficiently serious, a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept in the office and by a member of the employment committee but it will be removed from council records after 12 months, unless in exceptional cases where the period may be extended—up to a maximum of two years—subject to satisfactory conduct but only subject to satisfactory conduct of the employee for the 1 year / 2 year period.

Stage 4 – Dismissal or other sanctions

If conduct is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards, or where the Parish Council believes Gross Misconduct has occurred, DISMISSAL may result. Only the appropriately convened hearing panel can take the decision to dismiss an employee. The employee will be given a written statement of allegations against them, invited to a meeting and then be notified in writing of the reasons for the decision taken at the hearing. Penalties at this stage may include dismissal with notice or summary dismissal (i.e. without any notice), Final Written Warning with or without demotion, a reduction in pay, or loss of seniority. If dismissal is the outcome, the employee will be advised of the date on which employment will terminate. In all cases the employee has a right of appeal.

Very exceptionally, if an offence of Gross Misconduct is extremely serious an employee can be dismissed immediately without a meeting. In this situation, a letter setting out reasons for dismissal will be sent, within 14 days, to the employee offering the opportunity for an appeal hearing.

2.5 SUSPENSION

If the employee is accused of an act of gross misconduct, they may be suspended from work on full pay while the council investigates the alleged offence. Only the appropriately convened committee has the power to suspend. This enables a swift and thorough investigation to occur. Whilst suspended pending disciplinary investigation regular contact with a nominated person agreed by the council will be maintained although access to premises, equipment or systems may be denied. The council-nominated investigator from outside of the employment committee and appeals panel who compiles evidence for the disciplinary hearing will play no part in the subsequent decision-making to ensure impartiality. Any Member involved in a decision to suspend will not subsequently act as investigating officer or sit on the disciplinary or appeal panel.

APPEALS

The Appeals stage of the disciplinary process is part of the Code of Practice to which an employee has a right. It can be exercised after any of the stages of disciplinary action for Misconduct/Poor Performance or Gross Misconduct. The Appeals Committee will have had no prior involvement in the investigation or disciplinary hearing.

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should inform the Chair of the employment committee within five working days, in writing and giving reasons for the appeal. An Appeal may be raised if:

- The employee thinks the finding or penalty is unfair.
- New evidence has come to light.
- The employee thinks that the procedure was not applied properly and believes they were disadvantaged as a result.

The Appeal will be heard by a separate panel of elected members from Banwell Parish Council outside of the employment committee who have not been involved in the original disciplinary hearing, who will review the evidence impartially. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by an agreed representative or accredited Trade Union official at the appeal hearing. The outcome of the appeal and reasons for it will be advised to the employee within 14 days of the meeting in writing. At the Appeal hearing any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased. The decision taken at the Appeal hearing will be final.

THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

At each formal stage of disciplinary interview an employee has the right to be accompanied and can make a reasonable request for such a person to accompany them. An employee can ask for an agreed nominated representative (but not a solicitor or legal representative) or a trade union representative / an appropriately accredited official employed by a trade union to accompany them, to give support and help them prepare for the disciplinary interview. As this is an internal process there is no provision to have any external person accompany or represent an employee e.g. partner, parent, solicitor etc. The companion can address the hearing, sum up the employee's case, respond on behalf of the employee to any views expressed at the meeting, confer with the employee. However, the companion cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the hearing without permission, or prevent the employee from presenting their case.

HEARING PANELS

Disciplinary hearings will be undertaken by an Employment Committee, and any appeal will be heard by an Appeals Committee, both of which shall be appointed by the Parish Council, normally at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, having regard to the size of the Council and the need to ensure fairness, impartiality, and separation of roles.

Members appointed to the Employment Committee and the Appeals Committee must be mutually exclusive and must not have been involved in the investigation of the matter, nor have any conflict of interest.

Where the size of the Council, availability of Members, or the circumstances of the case make it impracticable for Members to undertake the investigation independently of the hearing and appeal panels, the Parish Council will appoint an external investigating officer. This may include an independent clerk, HR professional, or other suitably qualified person, appointed following advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Avon Local Councils Association, National Association of Local Councils, or ACAS, or via the Council's insurer.

The investigating officer will act solely to establish the facts of the case and will have no involvement in any subsequent disciplinary hearing or appeal.

Members of the relevant committee or panel must be present throughout the hearing and remain until a decision is reached.

NOTE-TAKING

A note-taker will be provided for all formal disciplinary and appeal hearings and for any investigation meetings where appropriate. The note-taker will be a person who is independent of the decision-making process and will not be a Member of the Employment Committee or Appeals Committee, nor the investigating officer. Where practicable, the note-taker may be an independent clerk, or another suitably qualified person.

In cases where an external investigating officer has been appointed, note-taking arrangements will be agreed to ensure the separation of roles is maintained and that the investigating officer plays no part in the decision-making process.

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

Notes will provide an accurate record of proceedings and will be retained in accordance with the Council's data protection and document retention policies. All records will respect employee and employer confidentiality.

GRIEVANCES RAISED DURING DISCIPLINARIES

In some circumstances when a disciplinary process has commenced an employee chooses to exercise their right to raise an internal grievance about the employment relationship with the council or individual Members. In line with SLCC and ACAS advice, disciplinary matters will be placed on hold until grievances have been aired and actions towards a resolution have been progressed. In exceptional circumstances, it is pragmatic to deal with the two disputes concurrently but in line with SLCC recommendations, advice will be sought from the appropriate body if this arises.

CRIMINAL CHARGES OR CONVICTIONS

If an employee is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence this does not automatically give rise to a disciplinary situation. Consideration will be given to how a charge or conviction may affect an employee's ability to undertake their job duties and their relationships with the employer, colleagues, subordinates or customers.

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0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Appendix A Protocol for Disciplinary & Grievance Hearings by the Employment Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Employment Committee has delegated authority to determine matters at the formal stage of the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. The Appeals Committee has delegated authority to determine any appeal arising from those procedures.

When undertaking these functions, the relevant Committee is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity and must observe the principles of natural justice. This does not require the formality of a court of law, but requires that: -

- (i) there needs to be a proper procedure. (see below).
- (ii) the Clerk must be able to present their case and to question the employer either directly or through their representative.
- (iii) members of the Committee should be present throughout the hearing and remain until a decision is reached.

ROLE OF THE PARTIES

The employee is the Parish Clerk, who has the right to present their case in person to the Committee, with or without representation in accordance with the Council's policies.

The Council's case will be presented by way of a written investigation report prepared by an external investigating officer appointed by the Parish Council. The investigating officer may attend the hearing to clarify factual matters if required but will take no part in the decision-making process.

Members of the Employment Committee and Appeals Committee must not have been involved in the investigation and must act impartially at all times.

PROCEDURE

A written investigation report will be prepared by the external investigating officer and circulated to Committee Members and the Clerk in advance of the hearing, together with all documentation relied upon.

The general procedure for the hearing will be as follows: -

- (a) the Clerk (or their representative) will present their case first;
- (b) Members of the Committee may ask questions of the Clerk;
- (c) the Council's case will be presented by reference to the investigation report;
- (d) the Clerk (or their representative) may ask questions or respond to matters arising from the investigation report;
- (e) Members of the Committee may ask further questions of all parties;
- (f) the Council's case will be summarised;
- (g) the Clerk (or their representative) will summarise their case;
- (h) all parties will withdraw; and
- (i) the Committee will deliberate in private and reach its decision.

The Committee may adjourn the hearing if further clarification, evidence, or advice is required.

DECISION

The Committee will reach its decision based on:

- the investigation report,
- evidence presented at the hearing,
- representations made by the Clerk, and
- the Council's adopted policies.

The decision, reasons, and any sanction imposed will be confirmed to the Clerk in writing within a reasonable timescale, together with details of the right of appeal.

APPEALS

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

Any appeal will be heard by the **Appeals Committee**, whose Members will have had no prior involvement in the investigation or disciplinary hearing.

The appeal will consider whether:

- the procedure was followed correctly;
- the decision reached was reasonable; and/or
- any new evidence has come to light.

The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All proceedings, documentation, and records relating to disciplinary or grievance hearings will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with the Council's data protection and document retention policies.

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Equal Opportunities Policy

LEGAL POSITION

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

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

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational requirements or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, including victimisation or harassment, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council, whether full-time, part-time, fixed-term, temporary or agency staff. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration, or any other employment benefit will be based solely on aptitude and ability. All employees will be supported and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council.

OUR COMMITMENT

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment will be tolerated. These matters are further defined in the Council's Dignity at Work Policy.

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

Any breach of this Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees are entitled to raise concerns or complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council and adopts the principles of the model employment documentation devised by the professional body for local council clerks (the Society of Local Council Clerks). This policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years. All other personnel-related policies will be reviewed against the values set out in this Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that the Council continues to strive to be an Equal Opportunities employer.

USES OF POLICY

This policy will be used in: induction of staff and Members, recruitment and selection decisions, training and development, promotion and remuneration decisions, retirement considerations.

It should be read alongside and cross-referenced to the Council's Grievance, Disciplinary, Training, and Dignity at Work Policies.

Weston-in-Gordano

Expenses - Travelling and Subsistence Policy for Councillors & employees

1. Introduction

This Policy for Members' Travelling and Subsistence Allowances (referred to in this document as "the Policy") is made under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and its subsequent amendments. Reference should also be made to NALC Legal Topic Note LTN33.

The Policy is approved by the full Council and may only be amended by resolution of the full Council.

The Policy contains general clauses describing the overall arrangements for travelling and subsistence allowances, together with Appendix 1 showing the actual entitlements as agreed by the Council annually or when appropriate.

In accordance with the provisions of the above Regulations, the Policy, including the Appendices, is made by Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council having first considered recommendations from the Remuneration Panel for North Somerset Council.

2. Interpretation

The term "councillor" in this Policy means an elected or co-opted councillor of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council.

Use of the term "the Regulations" within this Policy is a reference to the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and its subsequent amendments.

Where there is an issue over the interpretation of the Policy, the view of the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, shall be final.

3. Payment of Allowances

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council does not pay attendance or basic allowances to councillors. Expenses incurred for items agreed by the Council will be reimbursed at cost on production of a valid receipt or invoice.

The responsibility for the accuracy, integrity and correctness of the claim rests with the claimant. Where, in the opinion of the Clerk, a claim cannot for any reason be met within the rules of this Policy, the claim will not be paid and the claimant will be informed in writing of the reason.

Travel and subsistence allowances are to be claimed promptly and must not be allowed to accumulate before claim. Councillors are required to submit claims monthly, in line with the normal accountancy deadlines notified by the Clerk.

Backdated claims for a period longer than two months may be accepted at the discretion of the Clerk.

Claims made after 31 March in respect of expenditure incurred within the financial year ending on that date shall be accepted only up to the deadline announced by the Clerk, which will normally be 30 April. The Clerk shall have discretion to deal with exceptional circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the councillor to notify the Council of any material change in the information held by the Council and relevant to the processing of claims (for example, change of address or vehicle details).

4. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

Expenditure incurred by employees in accordance with the Parish Council's Financial Regulations, or on other items agreed by the Council, will be reimbursed at cost on production of a valid receipt or invoice and authorised via the Parish Council's Expenses Form.

Travel expenses will be paid as standard class rail fares or mileage allowance relief as set out in Appendix 1.

Parking costs will be reimbursed on production of a valid parking receipt for the date being claimed.

The current Travel and Subsistence Rules and Allowances are set out in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

For the purpose of making mileage claims, councillors are permitted to claim for "allowable journeys" only. A list and definition of "allowable journeys" and relevant approved duties is shown in Appendix 2.

5. Reimbursement of Discretionary Expenses

Expenses must be incurred wholly and exclusively for Parish Council purposes and must demonstrate a clear benefit to the community.

Certain discretionary expenses, such as refreshments for Council events, public meetings, or volunteer activities, may be reimbursed where they have:

Prior approval recorded in Council minutes; or

A clear justification in line with Parish Council policy.

Any Parish Council payment card must not be used for discretionary expenses unless explicitly authorised by the Council in advance. In all other cases, expenses must be paid personally and reclaimed via the standard Expenses Form process, supported by valid receipts.

Claims should be submitted promptly and are subject to the same approval, review, and audit procedures as other expense claims.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Jan 2026
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Appendix 1 – Travel and Subsistence Rules and Allowances

Car User Allowance for all employees

All Fuel types and Engine Sizes

Mileage rates: -up to 10,000 miles	45.0p
-over 10,000	25.0p

Bicycle allowance 2p per mile

Subsistence

Subsistence cannot be claimed for visits to Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council premises during normal working hours.

Councillors necessarily incurring additional expense in the course of their duties in respect of meals or overnight accommodation may claim reimbursement of approved expenses up to the limits shown below. These are maximum limits; where less is spent, only the actual amount incurred may be claimed.

All claims must be supported by valid receipts. Claims for meals cannot be made where meals are provided as part of a training course, seminar, site visit, or similar event.

- Breakfast (overnight stay or leaving home before 7.00am): up to £6.72
- Lunch (between 12.00pm and 2.00pm): up to £9.24
- Tea (must include the period between 3.00pm and 6.00pm): up to £3.64
- Evening meal (returning or working beyond 7.00pm): up to £11.44
- Overnight accommodation: up to £106.40

Any claims exceeding the above limits will be capped. In exceptional circumstances, subject to prior approval by the Council, additional expenses may be authorised. These subsistence payments apply only to duties undertaken outside of North Somerset. Subsistence cannot be claimed for duties undertaken within North Somerset.

Appendix 2 – “Approved Duties” and “Allowable Journeys” for claim purposes

Part A - The following is a list of approved duties within the terms of the Regulations and approved by the Council for which travel and subsistence claims may be made.

Attendance at:

- Meetings attended in an observer capacity pursuant to a legitimate role as a councillor
- Meetings attended in order to exercise a statutory or constitutional power, right, or duty
- Meetings of any body to which the Parish Council has made appointments or nominations (or any committee or subcommittee of such a body), where attending as the appointed or nominated representative
- Training or personal development events authorised under the Council’s agreed training arrangements.
- Events or meetings where the councillor is formally representing Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Part B – An “allowable journey” shall comprise the following:

An “allowable journey” comprises travel from the councillor’s home address (as notified to the Council) to the location of any meeting or event listed in Part A, where it is outside the Parish of Weston-in-Gordano, and the return journey.

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Grievance Procedure for employees

Purpose and scope

It is the policy of the Council to give employees the opportunity to air and seek redress for any individual employment grievance which they may have. Grievances may be any concerns, problems or complaints employees wish to raise with the Council.

This document describes the procedure which aims to facilitate a speedy, fair and consistent solution to an individual employee's employment grievance. This procedure is produced in line with the ACAS Code of Practice (2009) as set out in the Employment Act 2008 and subsequent relevant amendments.

This procedure will apply to all employees unless it conflicts with a contractual or statutory requirement, which will take precedence. It will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent relevant amendments.

PRINCIPLES

- a) At every stage in the procedure the employee will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made.
- b) Grievances will be dealt with promptly and consistently.
- c) At all formal stages, the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a nominated representative, who may be a trade union representative or colleague, but not a solicitor or legal representative.
- d) An employee will have the right to appeal against any outcome of a Grievance Hearing.
- e) At no time, will an employee be penalised or victimised for having raised a Grievance against the council.

PROCEDURE

Wherever possible, any grievance (including bullying or harassment) should be raised informally with the Chair of the Employment Committee, or another Member nominated for that purpose where appropriate.

As Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council employs one member of staff (the Parish Clerk), any grievance raised by the Clerk should be directed to the Chair of the Employment Committee. Where the grievance concerns the Chair of the Employment Committee, another Member not implicated in the matter will be nominated by the Council to receive and manage the grievance.

The recipient of the grievance will share it with the rest of the Employment Committee, subject to discretion and confidentiality. If the grievance relates to the whole of the Employment Committee, the Parish Council will appoint Members who are independent of the matter to hear the grievance.

If the grievance relates to the whole of the Parish Council, advice will be sought from an appropriate external body, such as the Society of Local Council Clerks or Avon Local Councils Association. Any Member involved in informal resolution will take no further part in any subsequent investigation, grievance hearing, or appeal.

1 Written Statement:

If the employee does not consider it appropriate to raise the grievance informally, or if requested following informal discussion, the employee should submit a formal grievance in writing to the Employment Committee.

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

2 Meeting or Hearing:

Normally, unless agreed otherwise with the employee, within five working days of receipt of a written grievance, arrangements will be made for a grievance hearing.

A Hearings Manager, selected from the Employment Committee and not previously involved in the matter, will make the arrangements and ensure the hearing is held in a confidential location, free from interruptions.

The panel will normally consist of Members of the Employment Committee, subject to availability and the need to ensure impartiality. Where the size of the Council or the circumstances of the case make it impracticable for Members to investigate the grievance independently of the hearing and appeal stages, the Council may appoint an external investigating officer to establish the facts of the case. The investigating officer will have no role in the decision-making process.

The panel will:

- investigate the substance of the grievance,
- hear submissions from the employee, and
- consider any other evidence it deems appropriate.

The hearing may be adjourned to allow further investigation.

The employee may call witnesses by prior arrangement. There is no right for Members or others implicated in the grievance to cross-examine the employee, though the panel may interview witnesses separately. The panel may ask the employee what outcome they are seeking and will take this into account when preparing its response

3 Response:

The Hearings Manager, in agreement with the panel, will advise the employee of the decision in writing within 14 days of the hearing and, where appropriate, include an action plan.

The Employment Committee will consider the options, costs, and practicality of any action plan, implement agreed solutions, and monitor outcomes. Where appropriate, mediation may be sought, and advice may be obtained from SLCC, ALCA, or ACAS.

4 Appeal:

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing within five working days. An Appeals Panel will be appointed consisting of Members not involved in the grievance hearing or investigation. Given the size of the Council, this may be an ad hoc panel appointed specifically for the appeal.

The Appeals Panel Chair will arrange to meet with the employee and any relevant parties without unreasonable delay. If the Chair of the Council was involved at the grievance stage, another suitable Member will act as Appeals Chair.

The Appeals Panel will review:

- whether the procedure was followed correctly,
- whether the decision was reasonable, and/or
- whether new evidence has come to light.

The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final and will be confirmed in writing within 14 days.

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

5 Bullying or Harassment:

Where a grievance concerns alleged bullying or harassment, it should be handled under this procedure and in accordance with the Council's Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment Policy. Where appropriate, disciplinary action may follow, or in the case of elected Members, a Code of Conduct complaint may be made via the Standards process.

6 Right to be Accompanied:

At all formal stages, the employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or nominated colleague. External supporters (e.g. solicitor, partner, parent) are not permitted.

7 Hearing Panels

Grievance hearings and appeals will be undertaken by Members appointed for that purpose, normally through the Employment Committee and Appeals Committee. Members involved in investigation, informal resolution, or the original hearing must not sit on the appeal panel. Where the size of the Council makes standing panels impracticable, ad hoc panels may be appointed, provided impartiality and separation of roles are maintained.

8 Confidentiality:

So far as reasonably practicable, all grievances will be treated confidentially between the panel, the employee, and any person complained about. Where wider investigation is required, the employee will be informed.

9 Notetaking

A note-taker independent of the Employment Committee, Appeals Committee, and any investigating officer will be provided for all formal grievance and appeal hearings. Notes will respect confidentiality and be retained in accordance with Council policy.

10 Record Keeping:

Written records of the grievance, decisions, action taken, appeals, and outcomes will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018).

11 Grievances raised during Disciplinary.

Where a grievance is raised during a disciplinary process, disciplinary proceedings will normally be paused in line with SLCC and ACAS guidance. In exceptional cases, matters may proceed concurrently, following appropriate advice.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Jan 2026
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2028

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Homeworking & Lone Working Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for homeworking and lone working by the Clerk at Weston in Gordano Parish Council, ensuring that working practices are clear, proportionate, and carried out safely. It recognises that the Clerk is the Council's sole employee and works primarily from home and alone. The policy formalises existing arrangements and has been reviewed to ensure that risks are appropriately identified and managed in a practical way suitable for a small parish council

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support safe and effective homeworking and lone working by the Clerk
- Ensure compliance with health and safety, employment, data protection, and governance requirements
- Provide clarity on responsibilities, allowances, and management arrangements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Parish Clerk, who is currently the only employee of the Council. Homeworking and lone working are the normal working arrangements for the role and are not considered discretionary benefits.

3. Homeworking and Lone Working Arrangement

- The Clerk's home is designated as the primary place of work.
- The Council does not operate a permanently staffed office.
- Lone working includes working from home, attending meetings, site visits, and carrying out duties without direct supervision.
- The Clerk will attend Parish Council and Committee meetings, training, WIG Café, and site visits as required
- Any material change to this arrangement will be agreed by the Council.

4. Working Hours and Availability

- The Clerk's contracted hours remain unchanged.
- Working hours are flexible and may include evening meetings.
- The Clerk will be contactable during normal working hours by telephone and email.
- When attending meetings or site visits alone, the Clerk will take reasonable steps to ensure personal safety, including advising a nominated person of their whereabouts where appropriate.

5. Equipment, Expenses and Allowances

5.1 Equipment

- The Council will provide or fund essential equipment required for the role (e.g. laptop, printer, software, and licences).
- All equipment remains the property of Weston in Gordano Parish Council and must be used primarily for Council business.
- The Clerk is responsible for the reasonable care and security of Council equipment.

5.2 Homeworking Allowance

- The Parish Council may pay a homeworking allowance of up to £26 per month, in line with HMRC guidance, where the Clerk works from home on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Where the Clerk holds more than one employment and claims a homeworking allowance elsewhere, the allowance payable by Weston in Gordano Parish Council will be paid on a pro-rata basis, ensuring that the total allowance claimed across all employments does not exceed £26 per month.
- The Clerk must declare whether a homeworking allowance is being claimed from another employer and the amount claimed, to enable the correct pro-rata payment to be calculated.
- Any change in circumstances must be notified to the Council promptly.

5.3 Telephone and Internet Allowance

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by May 2030

- The Parish Council will pay a fixed allowance of £5 per month towards the cost of telephone and/or internet use for Council business.
- This allowance does not require the submission of itemised bills and is payable regardless of whether the homeworking allowance is claimed elsewhere.

5.4 Review of Allowances

Allowances will be reviewed periodically and may be amended or withdrawn if HMRC guidance changes or if working arrangements are altered.

6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- The Clerk must comply at all times with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Council information and personal data must be stored securely and accessed only on Council-approved devices.
- Paper records should be kept to a minimum and stored securely when required.
- Screens, documents, and conversations must not be accessible to unauthorised persons within the home.

7. Health and Safety

- The Parish Council recognises its duty of care for the Clerk's health and safety while working from home.
- The Clerk will ensure that their workspace and working practices are safe and suitable.
- A basic homeworking and lone working risk assessment will be completed and reviewed periodically.
- Any work-related accidents, incidents, or safety concerns must be reported to the Employment Committee (or its delegated representative) as soon as reasonably practicable.

8. Insurance

- The Clerk is responsible for informing their home insurer that part of the property is used for work purposes, where required.
- The Council's insurance arrangements will cover employer's liability and Council-owned equipment as appropriate.

9. Performance and Management

- Homeworking and lone working do not alter performance expectations or accountability.
- Employment matters, including wellbeing, allowances, and performance management, are overseen by the Employment Committee (or its delegated representative).
- Appraisals and performance reviews will be conducted in line with Council policy and overseen by the Employment Committee.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- If there is a significant change in legislation or working arrangements, or
- At least every three to four years.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Dec 2025
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Sickness Management Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

The Parish Council aims to deliver effective and reliable services. This can only be achieved where sickness absence is managed fairly and consistently, while balancing the needs of the Clerk with the operational requirements of the Council.

The Council recognises that there will be occasions where the Clerk may be absent due to sickness or ill health. This policy is designed to ensure that such absences are managed sensitively and proportionately, taking into account individual circumstances and the fact that the Clerk works independently and primarily from home.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Clerk as the sole employee of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council and covers both short-term and long-term sickness absence.

3. Reporting Sickness Absence

If the Clerk is unable to work due to sickness, they must notify the Chair of the Parish Council, or in the Chair's absence, a nominated councillor, as soon as reasonably practicable and ideally on the first day of absence.

Notification may be by telephone or email and should include:

- a brief description of the illness; and
- an indication of the likely duration of the absence, if known.

If the sickness absence is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the Clerk should keep the Chair (or nominated councillor) reasonably informed of progress and expected return to work.

4. Certification of Sickness

- For sickness absences of up to seven calendar days, the Clerk may self-certify.
- For absences of more than seven consecutive calendar days, a medical certificate (fit note) must be provided.
- Where sickness continues, further fit notes must be submitted to cover the ongoing period of absence.

5. Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with statutory requirements. Any contractual sick pay entitlement will be as set out in the Clerk's contract of employment.

Entitlement to sick pay is subject to compliance with the reporting and certification requirements of this policy.

6. Contact During Sickness Absence

Reasonable and proportionate contact will be maintained during periods of sickness absence in order to:

- provide appropriate support;
- discuss progress and anticipated return-to-work timescales; and
- ensure the continuity of essential Council business.

Any contact will be handled sensitively and with regard to the Clerk's health and wellbeing.

7. Return to Work

Following a period of sickness absence, particularly after longer or repeated absences, an informal return-to-

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by April 2029

work discussion may take place with the Chair (or nominated councillor). This discussion may cover:

- confirmation that the Clerk is fit to return to work;
- whether any ongoing health issues remain; and
- whether temporary adjustments or flexibility are required to support the return to work.

8. Review of Sickness Absence

Sickness absence may be reviewed where patterns of absence give rise to reasonable concern. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- repeated absences occurring in three consecutive months;
- four or more periods of sickness absence within any six-month period;
- a pattern of frequent intermittent absence over a longer period; or
- a continuous long-term sickness absence.

These indicators do not automatically result in formal action but may prompt a discussion with the Clerk to understand any underlying issues and to consider appropriate support or next steps.

9. Long-Term Sickness and Medical Advice

Where sickness absence becomes long-term, or where there are reasonable concerns regarding the Clerk's ability to return to work, the Council will seek to support the Clerk wherever possible.

Where appropriate, the Council may seek **independent medical advice**, at no cost to the employee, to help inform:

- supportive measures;
- reasonable adjustments; or
- decisions relating to ongoing employment.

Any such action will be undertaken sensitively and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

10. Probationary Period

The Clerk is subject to a probationary period as set out in their contract of employment. The Council recognises that some sickness absence may occur during this time; however, prolonged or frequent sickness absence during the probationary period may result in an extension of the probationary period or, in exceptional circumstances, termination of employment, following appropriate discussion and consideration of individual circumstances.

11. Confidentiality

All information relating to sickness absence will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will only be shared where necessary and appropriate.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Jan 2026
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			

Adopted January 2026 to be reviewed by April 2029

Bills for Payment - 7th December to the 3rd January 2026
Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council

Method	Payee	Details	Net	VAT	Gross Amount	Comments	Minute agreed	Power
To Pay								Environment Protection Act 1990 s98(5a) Highways Act 1980 s301
BACs	K & E Property Maintenance	Emptying Dog bins Nov	£ 88.00	£ -	£ 88.00		07&08 2019	
BACs	West Mercia Energy	Electricity	£ 41.50	£ 8.30	£ 49.80		25.47	
		Totals	£ 129.50	£ 8.30	£ 137.80			

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Net Position by Cost Centre and Code - All Cost Centres and Codes

Cost Centre Name

1 Income		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
1	Precept		14,750.00	14,750.00			
2	Other Income						
35	CIL Payment						
44	Refund						
			14,750.00	£14,750.00			
2 Staff		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
14	Clerk Salary				4,566.48		4,566.48
46	PAYE						
					4,566.48		4,566.48
3 Administration		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
3	Audit Fees				125.00	280.00	-155.00
4	Chairman's Allowance						
5	Parish Pump						
6	Insurance				475.00	444.55	30.45
7	Communications				1,000.00		1,000.00
8	Stationery				100.00	14.25	85.75
9	Subscriptions				500.00	239.77	260.23
10	Travel				100.00	70.20	29.80
11	Telephone/Broadband				50.00		50.00
12	Councillor Training				200.00		200.00
13	Hall Hire				300.00	42.00	258.00
16	Sundries				50.00		50.00
19	IT Equipment						
23	Christmas Trees & Wreath				200.00		200.00
29	Recruitment - New Clerk				500.00		500.00
30	Use of Home as Office				312.00		312.00
32	Website				100.00	350.00	-250.00
36	Locum Clerk					855.00	-855.00
37	Postage						
40	Election						
41	Payroll				52.00	24.40	27.60
42	Hardware						
43	Clerk Training				200.00		200.00
					4,264.00	£2,320.17	1,943.83
4 Open Spaces		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
17	Dog Bins				1,056.00	770.00	286.00
18	Electricity				320.00	947.27	-627.27
20	Gardening/Planters				500.00		500.00
21	Village Green						
31	Middle Hill Common				5,000.00		5,000.00
38	Highways						
					6,876.00	£1,717.27	5,158.73
5 Grants		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
22	Grants and Donations				1,000.00		1,000.00
45	Cafe				200.00	84.00	116.00
					1,200.00	£84.00	1,116.00

Current Balance = Balance B/Fwd - (Receipt Budget - Actual Receipt) + (Payment Budget - Actual Payments)

Weston in Gordano Parish Council
Net Position by Cost Centre and Code - All Cost Centres and Codes

Cost Centre Name

6 Projects		Bal. B/Fwd.	Receipts		Payments		Current Balance
Code	Title		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
34	Speed Watch				250.00		250.00
					250.00		250.00
NET TOTAL			14,750.00	£14,750.00	17,156.48	£4,121.44	13,035.04

Current Balance = Balance B/Fwd - (Receipt Budget - Actual Receipt) + (Payment Budget - Actual Payments)

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 30/11/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		18,863.17
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/11/2025		15,766.60
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/11/2025		34,629.77
	Cash in Hand 30/11/2025 (per Cash Book)		4,245.51
B			30,384.26
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 30/11/2025	0.00	
	Current Account 30/11/2025	30,468.26	
			30,468.26
B	Less unrepresented payments		84.00
	Plus unrepresented receipts		30,384.26
	Adjusted Bank Balance		
			30,384.26
	A = B Checks out OK		

Budget heading / costcode	Budget 2023 / 24	Actual 2023/24	Budget 2024 / 252	Actual 2024/253	Budget 2025 / 26	Spend 01.04.2 - 30.11.25	Anticipated Spend 2025 - 26	Comments	Budget 2026 / 2027	Precept	Reserves
Staff											
Salary & NI	£ 6,300.00	£ 6,986.20	£ 7,500.00	£ 5,193.21	£ 4,566.48	£ -	£ -	Fig based on advert SCP 8 for 8hrs	£ 5,880.00	£ 5,880.00	£ -
Overtime	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	With a new Clerk you will need to think about budgetting a little.	£ 600.00	£ 600.00	£ -
HMRC	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 136.40	£ -	£ -	£ -	Should be £0	£ -	£ -	£ -
Locum	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 855.00	£ 3,975.00		£ -	£ -	£ -
Pension provision	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	Exempt if under £6240. Above Clerk can choose	£ -	£ -	£ -
Payrol	£ 52.00	£ 112.60	£ 52.00	£ 176.20	£ 52.00	£ 24.40	£ 24.40	Do you need this?	£ -	£ -	£ -
Homeworking allowance	£ 312.00	£ 234.00	£ 312.00	£ 274.00	£ 312.00	£ -	£ -	Depends if this is the only homeworking job	£ 312.00	£ 312.00	£ -
Telephone / Internet	£ 50.00	£ -	£ -	£ 120.00	£ 50.00	£ -	£ -	Make it a monthly amount e.g. £5	£ 60.00	£ 60.00	£ -
Training	£ 350.00	£ -	£ 250.00	£ 261.00	£ 200.00	£ -	£ -	Very important for new Clerk.	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ -
Travel	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	£ 27.00	£ 100.00	£ 70.20	£ 70.20	Depends on how you word the contract	£ -	£ -	£ -
Recruitment of new clerk	£ -		£ -	£ -	£ 500.00	£ -	£ 60.00	I suggest still budgeting for it for 12months but not precept.	£ 440.00	£ -	£ 440.00
TOTAL	£ 7,164.00	£ 7,332.80	£ 8,214.00	£ 6,187.81	£ 5,780.48	£ 949.60	£ 4,129.60		£ 7,792.00	£ 7,352.00	£ 440.00
Administration											
Audit fees	£ 460.00	£ 125.00	£ 125.00	£ 125.00	£ 125.00	£ 280.00	£ 280.00	Current ALCA rates.	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	£ -
Insurance	£ 450.00	£ 862.66	£ 421.00	Assume paid last yr	£ 475.00	£ 444.55	£ 444.55	Long term agreement 2nd of 3 years	£ 445.00	£ 445.00	£ -
Hall Hire	£ 550.00	£ 506.00	£ 300.00	£ 950.00	£ 300.00	£ 42.00	£ 42.00	VH figures	£ 360.00	£ 360.00	£ -
Hall storage					£ -	£ -	£ -	Given papers found might want to consider this.	£ 52.00	£ -	£ 52.00
Stationery inc printing	£ 80.00	£ 120.44	£ 119.00	£ 14.79	£ 100.00	£ 14.25	£ 14.25	Attempt to go paperless.	£ 80.00	£ 80.00	£ -
Subscriptions	£ 350.00	£ 430.67	£ 509.00	£ 323.44	£ 500.00	£ 239.77	£ 239.77	ALCA / SLCC / ICO/Scribe.	£ 400.00	£ 400.00	£ -
Training	£ 350.00	£ 80.00	£ 250.00	£ -	£ 200.00	£ -	£ 225.00	Allows approx 6 training sessions	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	£ -
sundaries	£ 156.00	£ 25.80	£ 41.00	£ 72.02	£ 50.00	£ -	£ -	What does this cover?	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00
IT Equip	£ 200.00	£ 120.82	£ 400.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 391.66	How will new Clerk print?	£ -	£ -	£ -
Website	£ 200.00	£ 279.00	£ -		£ 100.00	£ 350.00	£ 1,169.00	Info from pcwebsites	£ 330.00	£ 330.00	£ -
Election Charges	£ 92.00	£ 92.00	£ 92.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	Next Election May 2027	£ -	£ -	£ -
postage	£ -	£ 36.80	£ 41.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 20.00		£ 30.00	£ 30.00	£ -
Communications	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ ?	What was this for?	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
TOTAL	£ 2,888.00	£ 2,679.19	£ 2,298.00	£ 1,485.25	£ 2,850.00	£ 1,370.57	£ 2,826.23		£ 3,247.00	£ 2,145.00	£1,102.00
Open Spaces											
Dog Bins	£ 1,144.00	£ 1,100.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 878.00	£ 1,056.00	£ 770.00	£ 1,144.00	Based on £22 a week	£ 1,144.00	£ 1,144.00	£ -
Electricity	£ 260.00	£ 347.22	£ 250.00	£ 13.87	£ 320.00	£ 947.27	£ 1,000.00	Contract to be renewed. Will need safety check.	£ 600.00	£ 600.00	£ -
Garden / planters	£ -	£ 72.59	£ 100.00	£ 268.67	£ 500.00	£ -	£ ?		£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ -
Parish pump	£ 500.00	£ -	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ ?		£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
Christmas Tree & poppy wreath	£ 225.00	£ 170.97	£ 200.00	£ 212.25	£ 200.00	£ -	£ 200.00		£ 300.00	£ 300.00	£ -
Middle Hill Common	£ -	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ -	£ ?		£ 7,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 5,000.00
Environmental Projects	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	Suggested new cost code	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
TOTAL	£ 2,129.00	£ 996.34	£ 5,250.00	£ 1,372.79	£ 7,076.00	£ 1,717.27	£ 2,344.00		£ 12,044.00	£ 5,044.00	£7,000.00
Highways											
Speedwatch	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 3,250.00	£ 2,200.00	£ 1,050.00	£ -	£ 450.00	Are there any ongoing costs	£ 660.00	£ -	£ 660.00
Highways related projects	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	Suggested projects inc poss replacement lights.	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
TOTAL	£ 2,000.00	£ -	£ 3,250.00	£ 2,200.00	£ 1,050.00	£ -	£ 450.00		£ 2,660.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,660.00
Grants and Projects											
Grants / Donations	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
Café	£ ?	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 200.00	£ 84.00	£ 168.00		£ 168.00	£ 168.00	£ -
TOTAL	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,200.00	£ 84.00	£ 168.00		£ 1,168.00	£ 168.00	£1,000.00
Grand Total											
	£ 14,681.00	£ 11,008.33	£ 19,012.00	£ 11,245.85	£ 17,956.48	£ 4,121.44	£ 9,917.83	£ -	£ 26,911.00	£ 15,709.00	£ 11,202.00
INCOME											
Precept support	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 100.00	£ -	£ -		£ -	£ -	£ -
Misc income	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -	£ -	£ -
INCOME			£ -	£ 500.00	£ 100.00	£ -	£ -		£ -	£ -	£ -
Budget - income										Precept request	Reserves to be used
£ 14,681.00										£ 15,709.00	£ 11,202.00
Last Year										£ 14,750.00	
GENERAL RESERVES (ESTIMATED AT 30.03.26) - £23,000 approx 150% of the precept											
EARMARKED RESERVES (ESTIMATED 30.04.25) - £446.91 (Community Infrastructure Levy)											
last year										Band D - 101.72	
suggest this year										Band D - 107.60	
5.8% increase										Increase £5.87	
To raise £30,000 would be a 200% increase. With headline band d £313.32											