



Established 1894

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
HELD VIA A VIRTUAL MEETING DUE TO COVID-19 ON WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST 2021**

- Committee:** Lee Hamilton-Street (Chair), Sylvia Verrinder (Vice Chair)
Nikki Hamilton-Street, John Oldfield, Alison Reigate and Rhys Evans
For the meeting to take place 3 committee members need to be present, this is known as quorum and is a legal requirement.
- Present:** Councillors Lee Hamilton-Street, Sylvia Verrinder, Nikki Hamilton-Street, Alison Reigate, John Oldfield and Rhys Evans
- In attendance:** Katie Herr – Parish Clerk
- Acronym:** Angmering Parish Office: APC

AGENDA ITEM	MINUTE NO.		ACTION FOR
1	21/001	ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN Cllr. Oldfield nominated Cllr. L Hamilton-Street to be Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr. Evans and unanimously agreed	
2	21/002	ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN Cllr. N Hamilton-Street nominated Cllr. Evans to be Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr. Oldfield and unanimously agreed	
3	21/003	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None	
4	21/004	DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA. None.	
5	21/005	APPROVAL OF MINUTES Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the committee from Wednesday 27 April 2021 were agreed and will subsequently signed by the Chair.	
6	21/006	PUBLIC CONSULTATION No members of the public were present, no questions sent in.	
7	21/007	CLERKS REPORT & ACTION LIST	

The Clerk talked through the action list, she then asked if there were any questions.

The Clerk stated that the action relating to the code of conduct had only just been passed over to the Office Manager and that it would be prepared for the next meeting.

Chairman's file action will be removed as SharePoint now has all the up to date information needed.

Checks are still required into the grievance policy. The staff handbook and other policies are to be looked into and reported back on.

Action: Report back to committee on findings regarding grievance policy

KH

No other questions were asked.

8 21/008 HEALTH AND SAEFTY

The clerk talked through being back in the office and the COVID restrictions that are still being observed by the office.

Cllr. L Hamilton-Street commented on the latest walk around for the office and the lock up completed in 20 May 2021. The Clerk stated that all actions reported as a result had been completed and that the next check would be scheduled in for late August 2021, in order to stay on track with the scheduled dates.

Action: Set date for workplace inspections and invite Cllr. Evans

KH

The Clerk also confirmed that the PAT testing was due to be completed on 6 August 2021.

9 21/009 GENERAL RISK REGISTER & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

Both registers were discussed and the below are to be amended.

Financial Risk Register

None

General Risk Register

Look more into Mayflower Way and re-evaluate the scoring.

Action: Investigate Mayflower Way potential issues. Contact WSCC re adoption.

KH

Add risks surrounding the Community Land Trust and their housing on Mayflower Way.

Action: Add CLT Housing at Mayflower Way and score accordingly

KH

10 21/010 MONTHLY DUTIES

The last 3 months duties and the next 3 months duties were all talked through by the Clerk and comments requested.

No questions or comments were received.

11 21/011 STAFF VOLUNTEERING

The suggestion of staff volunteering was discussed at length with several pros and cons discussed. Days of action around the village were discussed for all staff members and councillors. The possibility of visiting the organisations where grants had been awarded and to see first hand where the money given had gone would be a worthwhile activity.

Cllr Hamilton-Street mentioned that WSCC had a staff volunteering policy and that she would try to obtain a copy.

Action: The Clerk will look into volunteering policies and other activities that staff and councillors could become part of within Angmering.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee's next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 3 November 2021 at Angmering Community Centre, Room 1**. Please note that this is subject to change depending on the current COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The meeting concluded at 20:16

..... Date.....
Chairman

Meeting Date	Agenda No:	Minute No:	Title	Action Required	Action to be taken	Comments & Next steps	Delegated To
05.08.20	7	20/007	Clerks Report	Does APC have enough councillors		Do we still need this one on here?	KH
03.02.21	5	20/034	Clerks report and Action List: Grievance Policy	Investigate what documents/policies are already in place that could be use and feedback.		G&O for Nov 2021 - Hand Book Update	KH
27.04.21	9	20/050	New Code of Conduct	To compose a report about how APC are doing against the 15 points of best practice		G&O for Nov 2021	TL
04.08.21	9	21/009	Risk Registers	Investigate Mayflower Way potential issues. Contact WSCC re adoption.		G&O for Nov 2021	KH
04.08.21	9	21/009	Risk Registers	Add CLT Housing at Mayflower Way and score accordingly		G&O for Nov 2021	KH

Key

Task has been started
Task to remian on the list
Completed
Task not yet started

Completed Actions have been moved to another tab



General Council Risks

General Council Risks - Operational, Financial, Legal and Reputational.

Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Mayflower Park Improvements	Public consultation, lack of uptake	3	3	9	Advertise in All About Angmering and on noticeboards. Use social media to advertise any consultation on a regular basis - perhaps a paid advert.	2	2	4
Mayflower Park Improvements	Funds	4	3	12	Ensure correct procedure followed when assigning contractors. Stick with the budget allowed. Source external funding/grants.	3	2	6
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Neighbourhood Plan	Volunteers lose interest	3	4	12	Employ AIRS to guide and keep on track.	2	3	6
Neighbourhood Plan	Delays caused by COVID-19	4	5	20	Asses situation and gather information as to impact. Weigh up delays vs spend vs gain.	3	3	9
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
ASRA Sports Pavilion	Current State of Repair	4	4	16	Verrander and Carpark repaired. Roof now an issue - obtaining quotes	2	2	4
ASRA Sports Pavilion	Lease with ADC	3	3	9	Close relationship with solicitor to deal with lease with ADC	3	2	6
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Office space	COVID-19 restrictions	4	3	12	Screens on desks - if required by staff member. Masks to be worn by visitors if they choose to do so. Staff to wear a visor when visitors are in the office, if they choose to do so. Hand sanitiser on entrance. Infrared thermometer to be used. Section of floor marked on front office floor for visitors to stand in.	4	2	8
Office space	DSE for home work stations - during office closure	4	3	12	All staff to complete DSE paperwork and actions resulting from it completed in a timely manner.	2	2	4
Office Space	Available space	3	4	12	Look into alternative accomodation for the office staff within the village- this will allow more interaction and benefit residents.	2	2	4
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Mayflower Way Ownership	Responsibilities regarding the road	3	3	9	Information is on file as to what responsibilities other landowners have over the lane. Land registry information saved.	1	3	3
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Angmering Community Land Trust Housing	Rising legal costs for changing of the deed. Change in house tenure.	3	4	12	Constant contact with ACLT board. Funds in budget to cover half the cost. We will be advised of all changes to the deed.	2	2	4
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Legal Updates	Legal updates that effect the council	3	3	9	All legal updates regarding the council are sent through via email from SALCC	3	1	3
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Documentation Updates/Amendments	Council documents being out of date	2	3	6	List of documents and renew dates now kept	1	2	2
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Staffing	Staff member leaves	3	3	9	Cross training across the office	2	3	6
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level
Social Media	Facebook - Councillor Use	3	3	9	Councillors are advised regarding political views on FB etc	3	2	6
Social Media	Facebook - Councillor personal posts	3	3	9	Councillors are asked to seek advice from the Clerk re posts regarding Angmering/APC on their own page.	2	2	4
Risk	Areas of Concern	Severity	Likelihood	Level	Mitigation/Action	Severity	Likelihood	Level

Boundary Changes	Reduction in size of parish, also incurs drop in precept	4	3	12	Increase engagement in all areas and keep abreast of any possible changes/amendments	4	2	8
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Risk Rating Guide

Severity (S)	Likelihood of harm occurring (L)	Risk rating = L xS
1 = Negligible	1 - Very low	0 - 4 = Insignificant
2 = Minor	2 = Very unlikely	5 - 9 = Low risk
3 = Moderate	3 = Unlikely	10 - 15 = High risk
4 Major	4 = Likely	16+ = High risk
5 = Catastrophic	5 = Very likely	

Risk Assessment Completed	22-10-21
Take to Full Council	13-11-21
Next Review at Governance and Oversight	03-02-22



Financial Risk Assessment

Financial Risk Assessment

Risk	S	L	Level	Controls in place
Banking Account Errors/going overdrawn	1	2	2	<p>All council bank accounts are reconciled every month in accordance with the Financial Regulations</p> <p>Monthly reconciliations are subsequently signed off by the Chairman a different councillor each month.</p> <p>Bank statements accessible online to check receipt of payments</p>
Risk of consequential loss of income	5	1	5	<p>Insurance cover in place for insurable risks, including business interruption</p> <p>New asset purchases added to insurable risks at earliest opportunity</p> <p>Full asset registered reviewed at least annually to ensure sufficient insurance cover in place</p> <p>Bank account general reserves to be increased over time to approximately 50% of the precept</p> <p>Financial performance of all activity reviewed monthly to enable issues to be speedily addressed</p> <p>All electronic records backed-up every night</p> <p>Precept paid in two installments by the District Council</p>
Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	1	1	1	Petty cash spending agreed in advance by RFO, and controlled by the RFO. Receipts provided for all expenditure and petty cash checked and balanced monthly

Risk	S	L	Level	Controls in place
Financial controls and records not in place	1	1	1	<p>Internal audit completed twice per annum in addition to annual external audit</p> <p>Internal audit reports presented to the next available Parish meeting, along with an action plan detailing how the auditor's recommendations have been acted upon</p> <p>All electronic financial records are backed up off site every evening</p> <p>Tenders and/or quotes for works are secured in accordance with Financial Regulations</p> <p>All financial records stored and saved in accordance with the council's Document Retention Policy</p> <p>Financial Risk Assessment to be reviewed by Governance Committee</p>
Faillure to comply with HMRC VAT Regulations	2	1	2	<p>VAT payments and reclaims processed</p> <p>Advice notes from HMRC followed at all times, using external expert advice where necessary</p> <p>Internal auditor reviews VAT as part of the twice yearly checks</p> <p>VAT reconciled monthly and claimed quarterly via online HMRC</p> <p>RBS accounting system on approved list for Making Tax Digital process taking effect from October 2019</p>

Risk	S	L	Level	Controls in place
Failure to produce a sound budget to support annual precept	4	1	4	<p>Previous year's budget and income and expenditure to date used to draft next year's budget</p> <p>Earmarked and general reserves reviewed as part of budget setting process</p> <p>Developing a council business plan will further inform longer term financial aspirations</p> <p>RFO prepares draft budget for review by Governance Committee</p> <p>Budget proposal discussed and agreed by Governance Committee as a recommendation to Full Council</p> <p>Full Council approve budget and agree precept to meet response deadlines set by District Council</p> <p>Expenditure against budget reported to relevant committees at every meeting</p>

Risk	S	L	Level	Controls in place
Failure to comply with borrowing restrictions	3	1	3	<p>Any new Public Works Loan Board (PWL) borrowing to be approved by Full Council after assessment of the business case</p> <p>Support with application process available through WSALC if required</p>

Risk	S	L	Level	Controls in place
Loss of interest from investments	2	1	2	<p>Investment Policy - reviewed annually</p> <p>Statements regularly reviewed</p>

Risk Rating Guide

Severity (S)	Likelihood of harm occurring (L)	Risk rating = L x S
1 = Negligible	1 = Very low	0 - 4 = Insignificant risk
2 = Minor	2 = Very unlikely	5 - 9 = Low risk
3 = Moderate	3 = Unlikely	10 - 15 = Medium risk
4 = Major	4 = Likely	16 + = High risk
5 = Catastrophic	5 = Very likely	

Risk Assessment Completed	21-10-2021
Take to Full Council	08-11-2021
Next Review by Governance & Oversight	02-02-2022

August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risk Registers from Governance confirmed. Take to Full Council. ● Complete the office and lock up Workplace Assessments ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put up notices following completion of external audit (if necessary) ● Prepare for budget discussions (using information from half year accounts, grant applications, policies) ● Receive 2nd half Precept ● Grass cutting contract runs out 2020 ● Order Poppy Wreath ● Prepare for the half yearly internal audit ● When external audit is complete, put up notices ● Review and renew insurance policy ● Take any Governance recommendations to Full Council, including updates to risk register and any H&S issues. ● Assess progress of Annual Business Plan ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Received</p> <p>Reviewed</p> <p>Completed – Oct 2021</p> <p>WIP</p> <p>Booked for December 2021</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>

October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarterly VAT reclaim ● Approve calendar dates for meetings in next calendar year ● Carry out staff appraisals (6 monthly) ● Order Remembrance Poppy wreaths ● Decide on Christmas event/plans. Order tree ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	<p>TBC</p> <p>2/3 November</p> <p>Down to individual groups (will take off for 2022)</p> <p>Completed</p>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remembrance Day ● Budget work to commence ● Assess progress of Annual Business Plan ● Annual Plan Session (All Councillors) ● Order Christmas Cards ● Risk Registers from Governance confirmed. Take to Full Council. ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	<p>Planning</p> <p>WIP</p> <p>WIP</p> <p>WIP</p> <p>WIP</p>

December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue with draft budget ● Send out invites to “Budget Setting Sessions” ● Send out Christmas cards ● Assess progress of Annual Business Plan ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council to approve the budget and precept requirement for next financial year ● Submit precept request ● Quarterly VAT reclaim ● Set a date for the Annual Parish Meeting (to be held between 1 March and 1 June – aim for end of May) ● Check Defibrillator battery/pads – Downs Way, Angmering. ● Check election procedures if this is election year ● Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure Health and Safety policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are up to date ● Create a schedule for renewing other existing policies for the coming year ● Complete the office and lock up Workplace Assessments ● Make arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting ● Review the current committee structure ● Risk Registers from Governance confirmed. Take to Full Council. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create monthly accounts/reconciliation for the month and take to full council	
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ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY 2021

**ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL
Authored by: Tracy Lees
Date Updated: October 2021
Version: 1**

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Introduction

Angmering Parish Council (APC) recognises that there can be situations in which a Volunteer can help make an appropriate and significant contribution to the work and service objectives of APC. This document, the APC Volunteer Policy, defines the terms and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which APC will follow in the appointment, management and control of Volunteers.

Our vision is that there is a strong, sustainable and influential voluntary and community sector that is able to make a positive difference to people's lives in Angmering.

Definition

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and/or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community.

Principles

By appointing Volunteers APC will adhere to the following principles;

- Volunteers will not be engaged in work which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post, nor on any tasks or projects which (within the past two years) were carried out by paid employees whose posts have since been deleted.
- Volunteers will not be used to do the work of paid staff during an industrial dispute.
- Current APC employees will not be engaged as Volunteers at APC.
- APC explains and accepts its responsibility for its volunteers and their wellbeing and respects their wish to always have a fair hearing if a conflict arises.

What Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them.
- To receive adequate support and training.
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment.
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner.
- To be recognised and appreciated.
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable.
- To know what to do if something goes wrong.

Angmering Parish Council expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest.

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- To uphold the Parish Councils values and comply with Parish Council policies.
 - To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training.
 - To contribute positively to the aims of the Parish Council and avoid bringing the Parish Council into disrepute.
 - To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Recruitment will usually involve a standard application form, informal interview and the taking of references (if required). Some roles may require further checks such as DBS checks which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance.

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions – e.g. where some tasks may be difficult for a person with anxiety, or to better fit the motivations of the individual.

Volunteer opportunities will be advertised on our website, via our noticeboards, through our volunteer newsletter and via social media. All enquiries will be responded to within 7 days.

Any new roles for volunteers must be agreed with the Clerk and Chairman before they are advertised.

Equal Opportunities

APC recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. All volunteer opportunities will be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status.

If a prospective volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for the Equal Opportunities, she/he will be deemed automatically to be unsuitable for a volunteer position at APC.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act – does not protect volunteers in the same way it protects employees. This was reconfirmed in January 2011 when the Court of Appeal ruled that volunteers without contracts are not covered by antidiscrimination legislation for workers. If the volunteer is a voluntary worker with a contract they may be protected, but even then, there are differences. The Equality and Human Rights Commission does suggest that “when you are taking up a volunteering opportunity with an organisation, this counts as if they are providing you with a service”, but this has yet to be tested in the courts.

Diversity

All volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.

APC is sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information, services etc. and requires all staff and volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language or mental health.

Good Practice

The APC Volunteer Policy has been put in place to ensure that the Parish Council offers adequate support for volunteers and it is intended to create an open and inclusive environment. Complaints should be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to;

- Protect volunteers
- Minimise any disruption to staff, service users and other volunteers
- Demonstrate that APC respects its volunteers; and
- Protect the reputation of APC

APC does not use the same grievance and disciplinary policy for both staff and volunteers, and the term ‘problem solving procedure’ helps to differentiate between

the two. The grievance and disciplinary policies for paid staff are formal in their language and tone, whilst the policy for volunteers is more informal.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions of their experiences of volunteering with APC. APC will also recognise their contribution through social media and through the use of certificates, newsletters and by saying thank you.

Confidentiality

Any volunteers who have access to confidential information will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in APC asking the volunteer to leave.

APC are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

Health and Safety

APC appreciates that all staff and volunteers have the right to work and volunteer in a safe environment. Therefore, all staff and volunteers must carry out their duties in line with APC's Health and Safety Policy whilst engaged in their work/volunteering activity.

Volunteers are covered by APC's Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

Grievance & Disciplinary Issues Summary

Volunteering is by and large a positive experience for everyone involved, but sometimes things can go wrong. This procedure explains what should happen if a problem arises if a volunteer has a complaint to make or if someone makes a complaint against a volunteer. It covers;

- Volunteer rights
- Problem solving procedure
- What to do if a volunteer needs to make a complaint
- What should happen if someone complains about a volunteer
- Some general points to remember

Volunteer Rights

Unlike employees, volunteers do not have rights in law. They are protected by the law in general, but they do not have rights specifically as a volunteer. This means that APC has no obligation to offer a volunteer a role or to keep them in a role, however long they have been volunteering with the Parish Council. It also means that a volunteer has no obligation to APC, can stop volunteering whenever they like, and do not have to volunteer when they do not want to.

Problem Solving Procedure

As volunteers do not have specific legal rights, APC has a procedure in place to ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and not discriminated against. A volunteer may make a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the organisation itself. A volunteer's performance may have declined, or someone may have made a complaint about a volunteer's work, attitude or conduct. This procedure is intended to make the process much easier to manage. It ensures consistency, provides a means of identifying a solution and demonstrates APC's commitment to volunteering good practice. It will also help to demonstrate the steps it has taken in the event that the relationship with a volunteer has to be ended.

What to Do If A Volunteer Needs to Make A Complaint

Stage 1 - Oral Complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be solved this way. Complaints should be raised with whoever usually supports the volunteer as soon as it is practicable to do so. If the complaint concerns this person, the volunteer should talk to the Clerk.

Stage 2 - Written Complaint

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the oral complaint, he/she should make a formal complaint in writing to the Clerk. The written complaint should be made within 14 working days of the oral complaint and APC will respond to the written complaint within 10 working days.

Stage 3 - Opportunity to Appeal

If the volunteer is still not satisfied with the outcome, then he/she can appeal to the Chairman of APC. The volunteer may be invited to meet with the Chairman and may be accompanied to the meeting by a person of their choice. The Chairman will respond within 10 days, in writing, following the meeting and their decision will be final.

What Should Happen If Someone Complains About A Volunteer

Stage 1 - Oral Discussion

The first step should be an informal discussion about the complaint with the staff member who usually supports the volunteer. This is an opportunity for the volunteer to hear about the complaint and offer their side of the story. It may also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate. Complaints should not be made anonymously; volunteers have the right to know what they have been accused of and by whom so that they are able to offer their side of the story. Volunteers have the option to be accompanied to the meeting by a person of their choice.

Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the issue has not been or cannot be resolved by the oral discussion, the volunteer may be issued with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case formally to the Clerk and may be allowed to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of their choice. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set, or help offered. However, if APC decides to ask the volunteer to leave, they should be given the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3 - Opportunity to Appeal

If the volunteer has been asked to leave, they may appeal in writing to the Chairman of APC. The volunteer may be accompanied to the meeting by a person of their choice. The Chairman will respond within 5 working days, and their decision will be final.

Exceptions

In some cases volunteers may need to be asked to stop volunteering immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if a volunteer is accused of harassment, theft, or angry or violent behaviour. The decision to ask a volunteer to stop volunteering will be confirmed in writing by the Clerk. In some cases, legal proceedings may need to be concluded before the next step of the problem solving procedure can take place.

Some Points to Remember

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- All complaints must be treated confidentially and should only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue.
 - APC will keep records of what happens and who is involved.
 - Meetings will take place in a confidential place.
 - The volunteer will be kept informed at every step of the procedure.



ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL LAPTOP SECURITY POLICY 2021

**ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL
Authored by: Tracy Lees
Date Updated: September 2021
Version: 1**

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What is the Policy

The policy outlines the responsibilities that Angmering Parish Council staff must accept when they are issued a laptop.

Who is affected by the policy?

This policy applies to members of staff within Angmering Parish Council who have been issued with a laptop.

Why was this policy created?

Laptops provide the convenience of portability. However this convenience exposes Angmering Parish Council to certain risks. These include but are not limited to:

- Theft of Angmering Parish Council property – Laptops are easy to steal and their relatively high value and easiness to sell makes them common targets of theft.
- Exposure of sensitive data or information – misplaced or unsecured laptops may expose sensitive information to the public. Loss of such data could be utilised by sections of the public for illegal purposes.

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- Damage of Angmering Parish Council property – Laptops can be susceptible to damage both due to their nature and their relatively fragile construction.

What do I need to do?

Any member of staff issued with a laptop will need to confirm, by signing an acceptance of the policy (Laptop Security Policy Acceptance Form), that he/she has read, understands and will comply with the policy · The policy will need to be signed by the member of staff, and a copy will be kept on file.

Angmering Parish Council Laptop Usage Policy

When Angmering Parish Council staff member is provided with a laptop, he/she accepts responsibility for safeguarding the laptop itself as well as the data stored on the laptop. Laptop users are expected to exercise reasonable care and take the following precautions;

- Ensure they have appropriate car and house insurance to be able to transport/use the laptop on Angmering Parish Council business.
- Take appropriate steps to protect the laptop from theft:
 - Laptops should not be left in an unattended office without closing and locking the door.
 - Laptops should not be left out overnight in offices and should always be locked away.
 - Laptops, where possible, should not be left unattended in a parked car. On those occasions where there is no alternative, they should be locked in the boot.

Laptops should be carried and stored in a padded laptop computer bag or strong briefcase to reduce the chance of accidental damage.

All conceivable situations cannot be covered in this document. Employees must realise that common sense should be your guide when faced with unusual or unforeseen situations.

Do not work or save sensitive information on a laptop without taking appropriate precautions;

- Sensitive information refers to any data that is protected by the Angmering Parish Council policy, or by any local, or national laws or regulations. This includes but is not limited to; personal records, personally identifiable information and confidential internal information
- It is Angmering Parish Councils policy to ensure that all hard drives are encrypted by JNR Computer Services before issue.
- Anyone needing to carry Angmering Parish Council sensitive data should contact JNR Computer Services for information regarding the purchase of an encrypted USB device.
- All members of staff are accountable for all network and systems access under their user ID, so passwords should be kept secret and should never be shared with anyone. Never store passwords with your laptop or in its carrying case.
- Laptops are provided for official use by authorised employees. Angmering Parish Council laptops must not be loaned or be allowed to be used by others.
- Avoid leaving your laptop unattended and logged on. Always shut down, log off or lock the screen before walking away from the machine. To lock your screen press Control, Alt and Delete to manually lock the device.
- Keep your laptop close to you and in sight, it only takes a moment for a thief to walk away with your laptop.
- Laptops must not be used on a public Wi-Fi system. They should only be used at home or in the office. (Home routers that provide the necessary security).

Take care to protect the laptop from damage

- Laptops should not be used in environments that might increase the likelihood of damage.
- Laptops should be kept in a padded carrying case or sleeve during transportation.
- Power off your laptop whenever it is not in use.
- Do not carry the laptop in suspend or hibernation mode.
- Extreme temperatures can damage a laptop e.g. leaving in a car on a hot day.

Virus Protection

Viruses are a major threat to Angmering Parish Council and laptops are particularly vulnerable if their anti-virus software is not kept up to date. The anti-virus software must be updated at least monthly. This will be done automatically through Windows updates.

- Email attachments are one of the main sources of computer viruses. Avoid opening any email attachments unless they are expected from a legitimate source.
- Report any security incidents (such as virus infections) promptly to JNR Computer Services in order to minimise the risk of damage

Software Installations

- Do not download, install or use unauthorised software programs.
- Any software that is required to be installed must be installed by JNR Computer Services.
- You must comply with relevant laws, regulations and policies applying to the use of computers and information.

Inappropriate materials

- Angmering Parish Council will not tolerate inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist, defamatory or harassing files, pictures, videos or email messages that might cause offence or embarrassment. Never store, use, copy or circulate such material on the laptop and steer clear of dubious websites.

Health and Safety aspects of using laptops

- Laptops normally have smaller keyboards, displays and pointing devices that are less comfortable to use than desktop systems, increasing the chance of repetitive strain injury. Where possible, place the laptop on a conventional desk or table.

-
- If you tend to use the laptop in an office most of the time, request a normal keyboard, mouse and screen.
 - If you experience symptoms such as wrist pain, eye strain or headaches that you think may be caused or exacerbated by your use of the laptop, stop using the laptop and consult with the Clerk at the earliest convenient time.

Reporting Damage or Loss

Any damage or loss must be reported to the Clerk immediately.

Laptop Security Policy Acceptance Form

Purpose

This policy addresses the actions that must be taken by all Angmering Parish employees who have a company-issued laptop.

Procedures for Laptop Physical Security

Each employee provided with a laptop by Angmering Parish Council is responsible for the physical security of the laptop. All laptops acquired for or on behalf of Angmering Parish Council are deemed to be company property.

All employees must take the following actions to ensure the physical security of Angmering Parish laptops:

- When not in use, the laptop must be locked with a password and caution taken when entering any company passwords on the laptop.
- Do not leave your laptop in your vehicle. If it is necessary to leave the laptop in your vehicle for a very short period of time, the laptop must be locked in the boot of the vehicle.
- When using the laptop in public areas, do not leave the laptop unattended for any length of time.
- Do not install any additional software or change the configuration of the equipment in any way.

Policy Violations

Violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. If an employee's laptop is stolen or damaged due to negligence, the employee will be responsible for the cost of replacing the laptop.

Please sign below to indicate receipt of the Angmering Parish Council Laptop Security Policy.

I agree with and will adhere to all of the rules and guidelines contained within the Angmering Parish Council Laptop Security Policy.

Employee Signature:

Date:

Supervisor Signature:

Date:

Code of Conduct – Best Practice Recommendations

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

- All councillors must read the [Code of Conduct](#). Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for their obligations and how they should be followed.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

- All councillors must sign the Code of Conduct Members Declaration and adhere to the code.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

- APC adopt the principal authorities code of conduct and will update accordingly.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

- APC Code of Conduct is loaded on to the APC website so it can be easily found via the search facility. All councillors have a hard copy.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Katie: Needs to create if needed.

The Clerk keeps a record of personal gifts and hospitality received by councillors and establishes the register of councillors' interests (although councillors are not obliged to register their interests in advance).

Councillors must notify the Clerk of all gifts, benefits or hospitality received personally (or by members of their household) in connection with their role as a councillor - over a value agreed by the council. This does not include gifts received on behalf of the council.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

- APC have a complaints procedure which is reviewed and due for update at November's Governance Committee. Anything else?

Filtering complaints: The Monitoring Officer usually filters complaints about councillor conduct and judges if the complaints are trivial or vexatious, or whether they should proceed to a full investigation. Usually this filtering is based on the judgment of the officer, often against a formal policy, though the Monitoring Officer may seek the advice of an independent person or members of a standards committee when they do so.

Safeguards A certain level of independent oversight is crucial to any standards arrangement. The inclusion of an independent element in the process of deciding on code breaches is important to ensure that the process is fair and impartial, and that councillors are protected against politically-motivated, malicious or unfounded allegations of misconduct.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

- APC are able to call on the following for independent advice:
 - Mulberry & Co
 - WSALC
 - NALC

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

- APC would use the Monitoring Officer at ADC

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

- We would do what has been suggested above. Guidance would be sought from ADC.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

- Regularly check (quarterly) the website has the most up to date information. Code of Conduct and a complaints procedure (needs readopting for 2021) are in place.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

- We need to adhere to the above if the situation arose.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

- The Clerk to be up to date on how to deal with alleged breaches. They should also seek relevant and regular information and training to keep up with changes in legislation.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

- Be aware of who to contact should the situation arrive. Received updated details – September 2021

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

- All agendas, minutes and annual reports are published in a timely manner on the APC website. Paper records are also kept.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

- Receive regular updates from our District and County Councillors at monthly Full Parish council meetings. If they can not attend a written report should be sent in prior to the meeting. Meetings also held with MP.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.



ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION 2021

ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL

Authored by: Katie Herr

Date Updated: October 2021

Version: 2

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with rights of access to the information held by them.

The council will comply with the requirements of the act, and in particular will:

- Make as much information as possible available via the publication scheme
- Respond to requests for information as quickly as possible, and in any event, within the statutory timescales
- Where, exceptionally, we believe it is not going to be possible to respond fully within the statutory timescale (for example, where we have to consider the public interest tests), we will:
 - Advise you why, and give an estimated date by which the information will be provided, and
 - Provide as much of the information as possible within the earlier timescale
- Apply exemptions appropriately and consistently
- Ensure that any fees charged are calculated appropriately and consistently

How to make a request

A large amount of information is freely available on the council's website, which can be found at www.angmering-pc.gov.uk

If you are unable to find the information you are looking for, you can request the information directly from the council.

The preferred method for requesting information from the council is in writing; either email or letter, to ensure the request is clearly understood. Requests should be made to:

Angmering Parish Council
The Corner House
The Square Angmering
West Sussex BN16 4EA
Or via email admin@angmering-pc.gov.uk

The request should provide as full a description as possible of the information you require, and your preferred method for receiving the information.

Complaints

The council would normally expect the Clerk or other named officer to understand what information you have asked for and be able to tell you where you can find it. If the information you received is not what you asked for or need, you should contact the Clerk or named officer to clarify your requirements.

If you believe that the council has not dealt with your request fairly and it cannot be resolved on an informal basis, you should follow our complaints procedure.

If you have followed our complaints procedure and are still not happy with how we have dealt with your request, you may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office to ask them to investigate further. They can be contacted at:

Postal address:	The Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House, Water Lane Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
Website:	www.ico.gov.uk
Telephone:	0303 123 1113

Persistent Requesters

If you believe the request to be from a persistent requester, seek advice from the Monitoring Officer at Arun District Council.

Charges

Charges made by the council in relation to the publication scheme will be justified, transparent and kept to a minimum.

Information which is published and accessed on the council's website is provided free of charge. Charges will be made for actual disbursements incurred as detailed below:

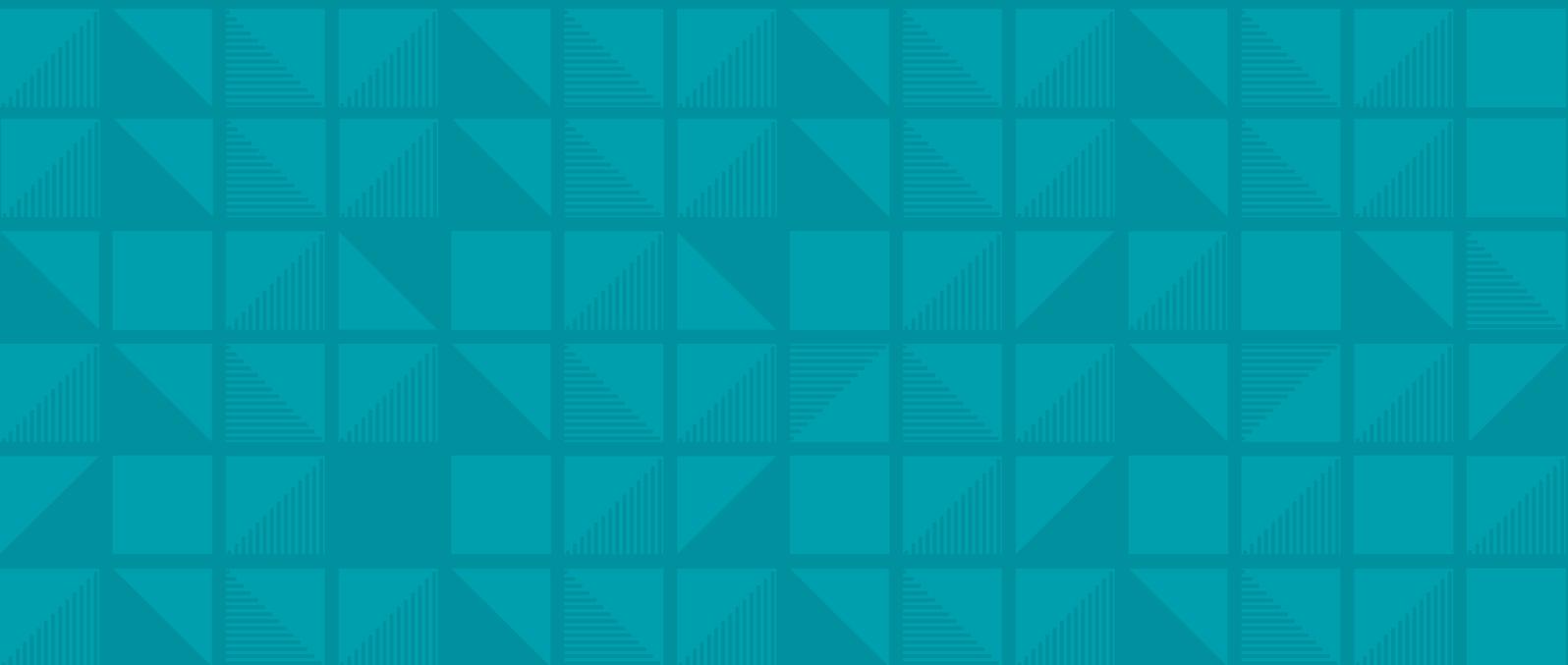
DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Photocopying @ 10p per A4 sheet -black & white	Actual cost incurred
Photocopying @ 12p per A3 sheet -black & white	Actual cost incurred
Postage	Cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class postage

RISK	LEVEL OF RISK
What is the possibility of change	Medium
Overall importance of policy	Low
Are there any legal/regulatory issues this policy covers	Yes

Based on the above assessment the overall risk is classed as low priority and should be assigned a review period of 3 years.

Meeting policy was approved at: Full Council Date:
Date of next review:

A guide to the Local Council Award Scheme



THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME EXISTS TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSES OF THE VERY BEST LOCAL COUNCILS, AND TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT ALL LOCAL COUNCILS TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

All local councils want to serve their local communities and make a real difference to the lives of the people that live there. This scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.

The scheme was created in 2014 and is managed on behalf of local councils by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB). Councils can apply for an award at one of three levels:

The Foundation Award demonstrates that a council meets the requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice.

The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

The scheme sets out criteria to meet at each level covering selected aspects of the council's work. Councils can seek to progress through the tiers over time thereby raising standards. Councils of any size can aspire to an award appropriate for their budget and level of activity.

To support transparency, every award level has a requirement for certain information to be published online (plus some information that does not need to be published). In all instances the council confirms that the required documents, information and conditions are in place (whether published or not) by resolution in public at a full council meeting. For Quality Gold, councils also provide statements for submission to the panel demonstrating excellence in their activities. The panel may ask for additional information to check the accuracy of claims.

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www.nalc.gov.uk

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CONTENTS

06 AWARD CRITERIA

This section sets out in brief what is required for each award and then explains in more detail the evidence that the accreditation panel is looking for. Councils should find this additional guidance helpful in identifying what is required.

18 ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Local Council Award Scheme is a form of peer review. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of an accreditation panel.

This section outlines guidance for County Associations (CALCs) managing the process for accreditation. These are not strict rules, and CALCs can tailor this to local need in consultation with NALC.

21 FEES

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to NALC
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or regional accreditation process.

22 EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow the sector to feel ownership of the Local Council Award Scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. This section outlines the evaluation and improvement process that will allow the scheme to be dynamic and respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

A COUNCIL CAN REGISTER TO TAKE PART IN THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME BY VISITING WWW.NALC.GOV.UK/LOCALCOUNCILAWARDScheme

THE STEP BY STEP PROCESS FOR APPLYING TO THE AWARD SCHEME CAN BE FOUND IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS SECTION ON PAGE 18.

THE CRITERIA IN THIS BOOKLET APPLY TO COUNCILS SUBMITTING THEIR APPLICATIONS TO THEIR LOCAL ACCREDITATION PANEL. THE CRITERIA FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME ARE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.

TO ACHIEVE A FOUNDATION AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT HAS THE DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR OPERATING LAWFULLY AND ACCORDING TO STANDARD PRACTICE. THE COUNCIL ALSO HAS POLICIES FOR TRAINING COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS AND IS BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it recognises its duties in relation to bio-diversity and crime and disorder, and that it has:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Its standing orders	Council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code	
Its financial regulations	Its action plan for the current year	
Its Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests	Evidence of consulting the community	
Its publication scheme	Publicity advertising council activities	
Its last annual return	Evidence of participating in town and country planning	
Transparent information about council payments		
A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors		
Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee and sub-committee meetings		
Current agendas		
The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year		
Its complaints procedure		
Its accessibility statement		
Its privacy notice		

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it recognises its duties in relation to bio-diversity and crime and disorder, and that it has:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A risk management policy		Disciplinary and grievance procedures
A register of assets		A policy for training and development of staff and councillors
Contracts for all members of staff		A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money		A clerk who has achieved 12 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year

The council notifies the accreditation panel co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The panel seeks assurance that a council acts lawfully and according to standard practice. Unless it is a matter of law, the panel is not making a judgement on the quality of the evidence at this level; it simply confirms that the documentation and information is in place, up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. For those documents that are not posted up online, the panel may ask to see the evidence if it is considered necessary.

- All policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.
- Standing orders, financial regulations, the Code of Conduct, publication scheme, accessibility statement, privacy statement and complaints procedure are public documents tailored to the specific council. Standing orders or financial regulations explain procedures for contracts and internal controls. There should be evidence of an open media policy which does not restrict engagement with the press. For councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 they also demonstrate compliance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The council does not need to publish the councillors' registers of interests on their own website provided that there is a working link to the complete register of all councillors' interests on the principal authority's website.
- The council's website should include the name of the clerk and contact details (address, phone, email) for the council as a corporate body.
It should also publish the names of councillors and councillors' responsibilities in compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code.
- The council posts up a scanned copy of the last annual return. The panel checks that the council has a limited assurance (unqualified) opinion from the external auditor; the opinion may contain recommendations for consideration as long as a qualified opinion is not given. The panel checks the arrangements for internal audit and internal controls. From 2017, councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 will not be required to submit their annual return for audit. Panels check that these councils comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- Information on all payments must be transparent and in accordance with financial regulations and statutory proper practices.
- The calendar (in any format) includes the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Annual Parish/Town Meeting and both meetings must be held during the correct statutory period. The calendar also shows that the council has at least four full council meetings a year.
- Similarly, the minutes for full council meetings over the last year include the Annual Meeting of the Council. If relevant, the council also posts up the minutes of its Finance Committee to demonstrate transparency according to statutory regulations and of its Planning Committee showing that procedures for reviewing planning applications are correct. The panel checks that minutes and agendas demonstrate the lawful convening of meetings and decision-making and that all meetings allow the public to make representations to the council.

- The council can post up the current or next year's budget (or both). Budget documents would normally show columns comparing the year in question with the two previous years; they include information on income and expenditure (or receipts and payments) and show how the precept was calculated.
- The council must publish an action plan; as a minimum this is a one-page document listing the council's objectives for the current year. It is not a parish plan which is a plan for the future of the community; the council can extract objectives for action from the parish plan depending on its areas of responsibility.
- The panel seeks at least one piece of evidence from council publicity that it consults and actively serves its community. Publicity might include an annual report, web material or news bulletins. The information gives a flavour of any council activity such as lobbying principal authorities, giving grants to community groups, the provision of a service or helping with community events. For guidance, councils can refer to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Similarly any form of consultation is suitable, including surveys, online polls, focus groups or public meetings.
- Council documents demonstrate that the council participates in the planning system by, for example, commenting on planning applications or working on a neighbourhood plan. Decisions on planning matters must be made in properly convened meetings and, if required, by delegation to a committee. Some decisions may be delegated to an officer.
- The panel may wish to check that insurance policies have been reviewed and are up-to-date and that the council recognises insurance as a way of mitigating risks to public money. The panel does not seek to judge the appropriateness of the insurance policies themselves.
- Contracts, disciplinary/grievance procedures, a risk management policy and register of assets can be based on a model but tailored to the specific council. They are not published. The contract(s) for staff can be provided in redacted format, or if there are reasons why the contract cannot be shared then the council provides a statement from a full council meeting confirming that all staff are employed under an appropriate contract. The risk management policy shows the council has considered health and safety of staff, councillors and others as appropriate.
- A training and development policy for staff and councillors can be a short statement of intent while a training record gives dates, titles and providers of development activities undertaken by named individuals in the last year, including, for example, events, online courses, learning on the job and qualifications. Councillors undertake a range of development activities such as attending conferences, undertaking training, or reading about developments in the sector. The clerk's training record includes evidence of CPD such as training, conference attendance, mentoring and studying for qualifications. CPD points are allocated according to a system published by the IDB.

TO ACHIEVE THE QUALITY AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION AWARD AND HAS ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT. THE QUALITY AWARD CRITERIA INCLUDE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE.

The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation Award and that it also publishes on its website:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within four weeks of the last meeting	A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	
A Health and Safety policy	Councillor profiles	
Its policy on equality	A grant awarding policy	
	Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	
	An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	
	Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins	
	Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it has:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A scheme of delegation (where relevant)	At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election	A qualified clerk
	An annual report that is actively shared with the community	A formal appraisal process for all staff
	Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public	A training policy and record for all staff and councillors

The council notifies the accreditation panel's co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that the criteria for the Foundation Award are in place if the award was granted more than one year ago. The exception to this is if the council received the Foundation award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the Foundation criteria again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

It then considers the additional criteria for the Quality Award.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information with a light touch, seeking reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and according to good (rather than best) practice. The panel confirms that the documentation and information is in place and up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. For those documents that are not posted on the website, the panel may ask to see the evidence if it is considered necessary.

- All council policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.
- Draft minutes (marked Draft) of all council and committee meetings should be posted up as soon as possible after the meeting and within at least four weeks. The minutes will show that the council monitors its actions, internal controls and performance against the budget at least every three months.
- A community engagement policy demonstrates the council's commitment to hearing what people in the community think and communicating its own actions and decisions. The council also gives grants to community organisations and publishes a grant awarding policy.
- Councillor profiles normally contain a photo and reference to the ward represented (if relevant) but personal contact details are not required.
- The panel seeks evidence that the council has in place light touch policies for managing Health and Safety, including its duty of care to staff and promoting equality in compliance with legislation. For example, evidence might include employment documents or statements on agendas.
- Evidence that electors can contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting can come in any form; for example, it could be an invitation to attend and participate in discussions or a record of how community groups spoke about their use of grant funding over the last year.
- The action plan (or similar forward plan) summarises findings from community engagement and sets out aims and objectives that respond to community views. The action plan includes a timetable for actions to be completed with dates for reviewing the plan. The council's budget shows how the action plan is put into practice and manages risks to public money.
- The council is expected to produce an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins throughout the year. The annual report and news bulletins must be online even if they were also distributed in hard copy such as in printed newsletters or village magazines. If the council uses social media such as Facebook or Twitter, this will be evident from the council's website. The accreditation panel will read the materials looking for evidence of community engagement, council activities and promoting democratic processes. The panel expects to see that the council consults the community in at least three different ways (such as surveys, focus groups, online or street polls and community workshops) and engages with other organisations, including community groups and the principal authority(ies). It will look for at least three positive actions for the community in the last year.

- The annual report should be actively communicated and shared with the community. It might be produced digitally and/or in hard copy. It is accepted that it cannot always be distributed to all households, but digital versions could be distributed by email and social media. Hard copies could be left at prime locations in a community, including a library, doctors' surgeries, schools, pubs, shops or residential homes.
- The panel seeks evidence from council documents and online information that it supports the community in planning for its future. This can include at least one contribution to creating, implementing or reviewing a parish or town plan, a design statement or a neighbourhood plan, holding community planning events, facilitating debate in the community about planning applications or registering community assets. The panel seeks evidence that the council has considered environmental matters as part of how it plans for the future of the community. This may be through the planning system such as considering environmental impact in neighbourhood plans, or through engagement with the community. The council might also undertake activities to engage with the community on the environment outside of the planning system, this might include tree planting, litter picking, reducing carbon and addressing climate change.
- The panel also seeks evidence of promoting elections and the value of the democratic process; this might include explaining how the system works, advising people of election dates and promoting the value of being a councillor.
- At the time of making the resolution, at least two-thirds of the seats on the council must be filled by councillors who stood for election at either the last ordinary elections or a by-election. This shows that the council represents the community through democratic processes. Councillors who stood for election, even if elected unopposed, do count, while councillors who were co-opted or appointed cannot count. If two thirds is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up to the next whole number using the table below.

Total council seats

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

4 4 5 6 6 7 8 8 9 10 10 11 12 12 13 14

Two thirds

- The panel may wish to check that a council properly operates the delegation of decision-making to committees, sub-committees and officers (where relevant). Arrangements for delegation may be set out in standing orders or in a separate scheme of delegation.
- The panel seeks evidence of how the council handles correspondence with the public and takes a customer service approach. Evidence shows how the council plans for and manages correspondence with the public, this might include examples of the council has addressed complaints, queries and other communications in the past year. It might also include any policies or training for staff that illustrates the council's commitment to customer service.
- A qualified clerk is defined in Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. The clerk (and deputy clerk) should be properly remunerated with a contract in accordance with terms and conditions set out in the national agreement or in a local government scheme.
- The panel may ask to see the document setting out the formal appraisal process that must be in place for all staff. It checks that the council has a training budget and may ask to see a general training policy for staff and councillors with a detailed record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year. The panel seeks assurance that a training culture is embedded in the council. The clerk is expected to achieve at least 12 Continuous Professional Development Points every year. The CPD guidance on how points are allocated can be downloaded from NALC's or SLCC's websites.

TO ACHIEVE A QUALITY GOLD AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION AND QUALITY AWARDS, AND IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BEST PRACTICE BY ACHIEVING AN EXCELLENT STANDARD IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation and Quality Awards and also publishes on its website:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods – Community engagement influencing council activity and priorities – A wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community – Co-operating constructively with other organisations 	

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting, that it has prepared statements (of no more than one page each) to be presented to the accreditation panel showing how it

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Ensures that the council delivers value for money	Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community	Manages the performance of the council as a corporate body
	Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	Manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business plan

The council notifies the accreditation panel when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online, and the prepared statements.

WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that criteria for the Foundation and Quality Awards are in place if an award was assessed more than one year ago. It then considers the additional criteria for Quality Gold. The exception to this is if the council received a Foundation or Quality award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the criteria for that award again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information in some depth. It seeks reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and aspires to excellence. The panel also seeks evidence of councillors and officers working together as a corporate body to achieve the criteria at Quality Gold level. Complying with the guidance below, the panel confirms that up-to-date documentation and information for Quality Gold is in place. The panel may ask for further information or talk to councillors and staff. The panel will be interested to note whether the council already has a reputation for being at the forefront of best practice. Councils seeking the Quality Gold Award should be aware that the panel is a peer group applying their own standards of excellence to the criteria explained below.

- In identifying excellence, the panel confirms that the council operates within the law as explained in standard works of reference, demonstrates transparent, efficient and effective decision-making and governance and exercises sound financial management.
- The panel also seeks reassurance that the council is not experiencing destructive internal conflict or that nothing has occurred to bring the council into disrepute.
- The council works to a forward plan (or business plan) created for at least three years even if this takes the council beyond the next election. This plan explicitly responds to community engagement. It sets out the council's aims and objectives for both the council and the community and shows how they will be achieved including financial forecasts for both revenue and capital for the duration of the plan.
- The annual report, web material and news bulletins publicise the work and achievements of the council and contain substantial evidence that the council takes the lead in actively representing and serving all parts of its local community. The council therefore addresses the diversity of its community, including, for example, different age groups, service users, physical locations, housing types, language, employment status and skills.
- These sources of information also show that the council seeks out and responds to views and ideas expressed by its community. The council uses a variety of ways (at least four) of consulting and involving local people to understand their views. There should be evidence that the council identifies local needs and views through community engagement that are then addressed in constructive council action. These sources also show that the council promotes local democracy.
- The panel seeks evidence that community engagement is at the heart of determining council priorities. Evidence shows this engagement leads to actions and projects within the council that deliver positive outcomes for the community. The council is innovative; this is the case if the council undertakes actions that are still relatively new or unusual for that council. There is evidence that the council embraces new ideas and trying new projects. The panel also checks that the council is co-operating with other organisations, including community groups, its principal authority(ies) and other agencies to provide an effective service to the community. Co-operation includes but is not limited to partnerships.

- The statement on ensuring value for money explains how the council reviews the quality and costs of its activities to confirm that the costs are appropriate. This could include, for example, the cost of the clerk's role in serving the council, the purchase of computer equipment or a grass cutting contract. It may also include reference to criteria from the other award levels as a number of these criteria do provide evidence that the council offers value for money.
- The panel seeks evidence that the council has considered climate change and other environmental issues and has engaged with the community on these issues. The council will have considered how it can support or facilitate the community to take actions that could have a positive environmental impact for the local area, or more widely.
- The statement on leadership in planning for the future shows how the council engages with a range of activities that influence the planning system and facilitate community-led planning. Activities may include, for example, identifying and representing community views on planning applications and local plans, working on parish or town plans, or holding community-led planning activities such as Planning for Real® or community conferences. The statement should include the council's approach to neighbourhood planning.
- Finally, the statements on performance management explain the processes by which the performance of the council as a corporate body is constantly improved and shows how the performance, skills and knowledge of each individual in the council is managed to help the council achieve its objectives on behalf of the community. The statements also include confirming that each member of staff has their own professional development plan and that the majority of councillors participate in a member development programme that is specific to their roles and the needs of the council. It is important to show evidence that the council is a good employer.

A GUIDE TO THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Local Council Award Scheme is a form of peer review. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of a local accreditation panel.

The aim of this accreditation process is to be as simple, efficient and flexible as possible. It also seeks to ensure that every council that wishes to take part in the scheme is able to, and is assessed in a reasonably consistent way.

REGISTRATION

1. The council registers its intention to apply for a specified award online at www.nalc.gov.uk/localcouncilawardscheme
2. Contact NALC at lcas@nalc.gov.uk or on 020 7637 1865.
3. The council pays a registration fee to NALC to cover the costs of managing the national scheme, including: administration, national online resources, quality assurance and review processes.
4. NALC provides the applicant with a template application form and the contact details of the co-ordinator of the appropriate accreditation panel.
5. NALC provides the panel co-ordinator with information of the council's application.
6. When a council is ready to make its application to the accreditation panel, its clerk notifies the panel co-ordinator that the council has passed a resolution confirming that all the documentation and information is in place for a specified award and submits a completed application form with any additional documentation required.
7. The council pays the accreditation fee which covers the costs administering the local service.
8. The local panel co-ordinator keeps a record of all applications and monitors their progress.
9. When the accreditation panel makes its decision it informs the council. It also completes an online form to allow NALC to update national records.

ONLINE CONNECTIVITY

The Award Scheme requires councils to publish certain information and documents online. In exceptional circumstances a council may not be able to put documents online because of poor digital connectivity in the local area. In this case, the council applies to the panel co-ordinator for permission to submit evidence for an award in an alternative format. The co-ordinator must be confident that poor digital connectivity is the problem rather than an unwillingness to use an online service for publishing council documents.

THE ACCREDITATION PANEL

The accreditation panel is set up by a County Association or a regional group of County Associations. The aim of any panel arrangement is to facilitate training, promote consistency and help manage the workload. Where an individual County Association is unable to support the scheme, a council will be able to submit their application

to an appropriate neighbouring or regional panel.

County Association's may adapt the accreditation process to fit local need. They are able to discuss this with the Improvement and Development Manager at NALC, for support and guidance.

The panel co-ordinator manages a pool of up to ten potential panel members, in the expectation that between three and five members are required to review each application. The panel includes experienced councillors and clerks as well as someone independent of the sector with an understanding of local government.

Panel membership should be reviewed by the panel co-ordinator every two years.

At the beginning of the accreditation process a panel is drawn together from the pool of potential members. The panel could choose a lead panellist or chair if needed to facilitate decision making.

All panel members are expected to use email or an online service to read a council's documents and also act in the spirit of a Code of Conduct; for example, they do not assess an award for their own or a neighbouring council.

The accreditation panel determines how often an accreditation process occurs, or an appropriate trigger for this to take place. For example, a panel may decide to convene every two months or may wait until the receipt of ten applications (as long as this is no later than two months after an application has been received). Panels should note that all costs of administering the panels must be met from application fees. So, to minimise costs, the panel can convene and conduct its business remotely rather than face-to-face. The resources provided by NALC will support this way of working.

The local panels have discretion over the detail of how they organise the accreditation process. In consultation with the panel co-ordinators, NALC will provide regularly updated guidance and support for accreditation panels.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The emphasis of the scheme is on encouraging and supporting the improvement of councils. The aim of the panel is therefore to help councils to achieve awards and panels are urged to be constructive.

The panel checks that the criteria for the relevant award have been met in published and/or requested information. Most documents and information will be posted on a website. Where it is not appropriate for a document or information to be on a website, the panel is permitted to ask to see electronic versions.

As all information and documents are available online or in electronic format, the panel's work can be done without meeting. Each member of the panel completes a form showing their responses to the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator reviews the completed forms from the panel which decides whether additional information or documents are required.

Panel members do not need to examine every document in detail but are advised to carry out spot-checks enabling them to make recommendations.

For Quality Gold, the panel may wish to discuss the council’s activities with councillors, or staff or visit the parish but the cost of doing so must be covered by the fee.

THE OUTCOME

When the panel is satisfied that it has seen sufficient information, the findings are presented in a report agreed by the panel. The panel makes one of three recommendations to the council:

- The Award is achieved.
- The Award is achieved but the council is advised to make some small changes.
- The Award is not achieved until specified improvements have been made.

If a council has applied for a higher award but has not achieved all the criteria, the panel can award a lower award if appropriate.

The aim of the scheme is to be supportive and help councils achieve the status they have applied for and so it is expected that achieving a lower (or no) award would be an exceptional circumstance. The panel should let the council know as soon as possible if it appears that they have omitted necessary evidence or it appears likely that they will not achieved the award, and the council should be given some time to respond to that feedback.

The co-ordinator informs the council of the outcome within two months of being notified of the application. They also inform NALC of the outcome and successful councils are included in a published list. NALC issues a certificate and provides resources to help the council celebrate and promote their achievement which is sent to the council and panel co-ordinator.

Councils and accreditation panels will be contacted by NALC for feedback on the process and the benefits of receiving the awards.

A council may appeal to the IDB (with an additional fee) if it feels that the panel’s decision is unjustified. The IDB will appoint two representatives to review the appeal and the IDB’s decision is final.

UPGRADING ACCREDITATION, RE-ACCREDITATION AND REMOVAL OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation lasts for four years.

Applying for a higher award:

- If a council wishes to apply for a higher award, it makes a fresh registration and application.
- A council can make a fresh application for a higher award at any time. If this is within one year of the previously successful accreditation, the panel does not need to revisit evidence that was previously approved.

Re-accreditation:

- The council may seek re-accreditation at the same level after four years. If it does not achieve a new accreditation or re-accreditation before four-year end-date, it loses its award.

Removal of accreditation:

- The council is expected to maintain its reputation by meeting the criteria throughout the four years.
- Although some circumstances may change, the council will not lose its award unless a significant event such as an audit, employment tribunal, court case or police investigation demonstrates the council’s poor performance. In this case, a panel co-ordinator asks the IDB to appoint two representatives to review the situation. The IDB assesses the severity of the case before deciding whether to impose a sanction which may include the removal of all awards or returning the council to a lower award.
- The council can appeal to the IDB if the decision to remove an award is taken in which case two different IDB representatives review the case and their decision is final.

FEES

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to the National Association of Local Councils
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or regional accreditation process.

The registration fee paid to NALC is £50 paid by all councils for each level regardless of size.¹

The accreditation fee² varies according to:

- The award applied for
- The income of the council
- The council’s accreditation history.

	ANNUAL INCOME UNDER £25,000	ANNUAL INCOME OVER £25,000
Foundation Standard	£50	£80
Quality Standard	£80	£100
Quality Gold	£100	£200

The accreditation fee covers the cost of the accreditation panel decision making process only. County Associations may charge additional costs for advice, training or support of applications. Those services and fees will be determined locally.

The IDB will review fee levels annually.

The fee is reduced by 20% if the council sought accreditation at a lower level within the previous 12 months as the checking process covering criteria for the previous award requires less work.

¹ All figures quoted are excluding VAT.

² The figures quoted are the discounted rates for members of NALC. Both the registration fee and accreditation fee are reduced by 50% for member councils. Non-member councils must pay the full fee ie double the figures quoted in this grid.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow councils to feel ownership of the scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. It should also allow the scheme to be dynamic and able to respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Twice a year, representatives of the IDB will check at random a small sample of awards by carrying out spot checks of documents and information posted on a council's website.

The findings will not affect a council's award but will be used to improve the training for accreditation panels and to inform regular reviews of the scheme.

EVALUATION

At the end of each accreditation process the council and the panel will be sent a short evaluation questionnaire. This will aim to gather feedback on the process, the criteria, the resources provided by NALC and how they could be improved.

One year after accreditation the council will be contacted again. The council will be encouraged to apply for the next level of award, to make use of the fee discount. The council will also be asked to describe the benefits they have felt from being accredited by the scheme and their feedback on the scheme as a whole.

IMPROVEMENT

The feedback collected will be used to inform improvements to the scheme. The whole scheme, including the content and accreditation process, will be reviewed every year.

These reviews will alternate between:

- A light touch approach only making urgent required changes where these are considered critical to the scheme.
- A wider ranging review aiming to best address collected feedback from all parties.
- The IDB will oversee all changes to the scheme.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

ABOUT

The Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed them by their peers, and put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The scheme has been designed to provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together, to share best practices, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach their full potential.

LCAS undergoes a review every year. Local councils must meet the criteria of the guidance that is in place at the date they submit their completed application form to their local accreditation panel.

WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY?

There is a range of reasons why a council could benefit from taking part in the award scheme. For those councils who are already confident that they perform to a high standard the scheme provides assurance to the council that it is up-to-date and progressive by the standards set by the sector. For those who wish to improve, it provides a framework to plan and make the first steps. Helping the council improve performance and confidence, with policies in place for continuous development. And for all councils winning the award should be a celebration for councillors and officers, as their commitment and hard work are recognised and respected.

An award is a tool that councils can use when working with the local community or other local partners. Giving them confidence that the council is delivering to a national professional standard.

And finally, the scheme will contribute to the national reputation of local councils demonstrating achievements and a commitment to improvement.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

1. The first step is to **register** online with NALC. You will then be charged a £50 registration fee by NALC.

Tip: You do not need to have all the criteria in place at this stage, you are simply registering your interest in taking part in the scheme

Tip: You can apply for any award level - you don't need to start at Foundation

2. When you have the criteria prepared and in place, confirm this in a public meeting

3. You should then notify your local accreditation panel coordinator and provide the [application form](#) including links to online documents. At this stage, you will also pay an accreditation fee to your local County Association. This fee depends on the award level you are applying for and the size of your council (full information in the Local Council Award Scheme Guide)
4. Your local panel coordinator will contact you with the result of your application.

WHICH AWARD LEVEL SHOULD WE APPLY?

Foundation Award

The Foundation award is for councils who want to show they meet a set of minimum standards to deliver effectively for their communities. To meet this award the council demonstrates that it has the required documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. The council also has policies for training for its councillors and officers and so has the foundations for improvement and development in place.

The Foundation award allows you to benchmark your performance as well as challenging you to consider your councils continuing development and improvement.

Quality Award

The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Quality councils go above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their communities and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

To achieve the Quality Award a council demonstrates that it meets all requirements of the Foundation Award and has additional evidence of good governance, effective community engagement and council improvement. Due to the level of this achievement, a council with a Quality Award can also be eligible to use the general power of competence.

Quality Gold Award

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.



ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2021

ANGMERING PARISH COUNCIL

Authored by: Katie Herr

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Introduction

Angmering Parish Council believes a complaints procedure demonstrates that the Council

- wishes to provide a good service
- values feedback
- undertakes its business in an open and honest manner
- wishes to deal with complaints fairly

The Council believes that complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving its services and performance.

What is a complaint?

1. For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff affecting an individual, group or organisation.

2. This definition covers most complaints – such as:

- dissatisfaction with the administration of policy and decisions
- delays in responding to service requests
- failure to achieve standards of service
- failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities
- employees' behaviour or attitude

How we deal with complaints

- Most complaints will be reviewed by the Clerk whose responsibility it is to investigate, as necessary, and respond as quickly as possible. In normal circumstances a response should be sent within 10 working days.
- Where this is not possible an interim response should be sent giving an indication of when a full reply can be expected.
- If a complainant is dissatisfied with the full response, this fact should be drawn to the attention of the Chairman of the Council. In consultation with other Members, as necessary, and after obtaining any further relevant information, the Chairman will issue a further response, within 3 weeks.

Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

For the purposes of this procedure, complainants may be deemed unreasonably persistent if they demonstrate one or more of the following behaviours:

- Persistence in pursuing a complaint where Angmering Parish Councils complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted, or where the substance of the complaint has been fully aired in another forum (including complaints panels). This includes seeking an unrealistic outcome to the complaint.
- Submitting repeat complaints, after complaints processes have been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure.
- Refusing to accept the decision – repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from the authority's staff.
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.

- Making what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seeking to have them replaced
- Having an excessive number of contacts with Angmering Parish Council staff while a complaint is being looked into – placing unreasonable demands on staff, such as repeated or lengthy phone calls, requests for personal interviews or lengthy correspondence every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- Changing the substance of a complaint or continually raising new issues whilst the complaint is being investigated, or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are all fully answered.
- Raising an excessive number of complaints, which upon investigation cannot be substantiated.
- Adopting a 'scattergun' approach: pursuing a complaint or complaints with all or some of the Office Staff/Clerk/ Angmering Parish Councillor/District Councillor/Chief Executive of ADC/ Council Leader, at the same time, and possibly also with a Members of Parliament/ independent auditor/the Standards Board/local police/solicitors/the Ombudsman.
Denying receiving an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically responding to their complaint.
- It is emphasised that this approach should be used only in exceptional circumstances after all reasonable measures have been taken to try to resolve a complaint by following the Angmering Parish Council complaints procedure. A complainant may be identified as unreasonably persistent at any stage of the complaints procedure and levels of action should be determined by the seriousness of the conduct **not** the stage it has reached in the complaints procedure.
- Where officers identify that they may be dealing with an unreasonably persistent complainant in accordance with the above criteria, the case should be referred as soon as possible to the Monitoring Officer at Arun District Council (ADC) for advice and assistance in bringing the case to a close.

Complaints about Members of Angmering Parish Council

- All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code – which is the Model Code of Conduct for Members approved by Parliament – specifies a Councillor's obligations.
- Alleged breach of the Code must be reported in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Arun District Council.

Complaints about services provided by other public organisations

- Given that some public services in Angmering are provided by either Arun District Council or West Sussex County Council – and that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing.
- Angmering Parish Council will advise and, if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other organisations providing services in the village

Contacts

The Clerk, or the Chairman Angmering Parish Council, The Corner House,
The Square, Angmering,
West Sussex. BN16 4EA

The Monitoring Officer,
Arun District Council,
Arun Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
West Sussex.
BN17 5LF

RISK	LEVEL OF RISK
What is the possibility of change	Low
Overall importance of policy	Low
Are there any legal/regulatory issues this policy covers	Yes

Based on the above assessment the overall risk is classed as low priority and should be assigned a review period of 3 years.

Meeting policy was approved at: Full Council Date:
Date of next review: