Appendix A

Western Valley
Parish Council

Planning Committee
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Remit

To review all planning applications and respond on behalf of the council to planning consultations, and when considered appropriate send a representative of the Western Valley Parish Council to any relevant planning committee meetings of the planning authority.

2. Meetings

To meet once per month, nominally the 4th Thursday of the month. The Clerk may call additional meetings to discuss particularly large applications where it is not appropriate to seek an extension to respond.

The Clerk will minute all meetings of the Planning Committee and minutes will be submitted to the Parish Council at the next meeting for adoption.

The Clerk is responsible for submitting the responses to the Planning Authority. Where the Committee cannot formally meet, the Clerk is delegated to respond to consultations on behalf of the Committee. This delegation will only be used in exceptional circumstances where:

- the committee or council cannot meet,
- an extension to respond to the consultation cannot be secured, and
- where possible only after consultation with least 3 members of the council.

All responses submitted using delegated powers will be displayed on the WVPC website, and reported at the next available meeting of the Planning Committee.

3. Appointment of members

The Committee will be comprised 5 core members with a quorum of three. Members will be appointed at the Annual Council meeting. The Chairman will be elected by the Planning Committee at its first meeting after the Annual Council meeting, they may also appoint a Vice-Chairman. Committee membership substitutions can be made with any councillor of Western Valley Parish Council, this is to ensure where possible 5 members are present at all planning committee meetings.

4. Delegated Authority

The Committee has delegated powers to consider and respond to on behalf of the Council:

- all planning consultations

- other matters related to planning which the Council has not formally been consulted on, including those outside the parish, which the Committee believes to be important to the residents of the Civil Parish of Western**.**

5. Scope

To consider all planning applications.

To study relevant plans, individual Councillors to take a view as to whether to visit relevant sites to form their opinion and consider any comments from members of the parish before coming to a decision.

To endeavour to ensure that all relevant parties are given an adequate hearing if they request this in accordance with the Council's standing orders.

To endeavour to ensure that any objections or recommendations are based solely on planning criteria.

To consider environmental aspects when considering planning applications.

To monitor the general environment of the parish and report to the planning authorities any potential planning breaches.

To respond on behalf of the Parish Council to all consultations regarding planning issues or issues that will have an impact on planning. The Committee is authorised to make written representation and/or to elect a member to attend the hearings of the SODC or VoWHDC Planning Committee to make representation on behalf of the Council.

When an application is subject to appeal, the Committee is authorised to make written representation and/or to elect a member to attend the hearing to make representation on behalf of the Council.

To attend planning training sessions as offered by the planning authority and to read all relevant documentation to ensure that the Committee is aware of current legislation and regulations.

When appropriate, seek expert opinion and guidance from other parties, including other local Parish or Town Councils.

6. Review

This Terms of Reference document was reapproved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 10th August 2023, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term.

Signed: Dated: 10th August 2023

Cllr S Peacock, Chairman of the Council

Appendix B

Title	Clerk's Report
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 10th August 2023

7.2. To approve approach to the creation of a Parish Logo, allocate budget.

Proposal, to ask local secondary schools, if their GSCE level + would be interested in running a project to design a logo. To be careful that any wording meant at the discretion of the Council another logo could be adopted, or elements only from the winning designs.

This Council meeting to approve, general brief, timescales, schools to ask, competition format. NOTE: prizes could only be given using the "Chairman's Allowance" as the Council does not have General Powers of Competence.

Appendix C

Title	Finance
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 10th August 2023

8.1. To approve additional payments to be made as soon as possible once precept has been received..

[INSERT TABLE FROM SCRIBE]

Appendix D

Title	Training Courses
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 10th August 2023

9.1. To consider list of upcoming training courses and approve budget and attendance by Councillors or Clerk.

Additional Courses have been made available since our last meeting**:**

Accurate Agendas and Effective Minutes (online) – 20th October 2023 (AM) £60
This workshop outlines good practice in preparing and drafting effective agendas and the duties and responsibilities of the minute taker in the context of Town and Parish council meetings. It will provide examples of good/poor practice and practical support for writing difficult minutes.

Planning (in person – Witney) – 13th November 2023 (AM) £55
This half day training event for clerks and councillors has been specially designed for member councils who want to respond appropriately to planning applications which come before them.

Appendix E

Western Valley
Parish Council

Staffing Committee
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Remit
The Committee is responsible for the employment and welfare of all employees

2. Frequency of Meetings
To meet as required to support the remit and scope of the Staffing Committee.

3. Appointment of members
The Committee will be comprised of four members appointed annually at the Annual Council Meeting, with a quorum of three.

4. Chairman
The Chairman is to be elected annually by the Committee at their first meeting, before proceeding to any other business. The office shall be held for one year.

5. Voting
Only members appointed to the committee may vote at the meeting. In the case of an equal vote the Chairman of the Committee shall have a second or casting vote.

6. Minutes
All minutes shall be open for inspection by a Member of the Parish Council, if appropriate.

7. Admission of the Public and Press
The Public and Press may not be admitted to these meetings as

> "In accordance with s1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of these items due to the confidential nature of this item".

8. Specific Delegated Powers
- To review staffing structures and levels and make recommendations to the Council.
- To agree and review annually contracts of employment, job descriptions, person specifications for staff and to review the Clerk/RFO performance.
- To review staff salaries and terms of conditions and make recommendations to Council.
- To appoint, from its membership, a recruitment panel when necessary and recommend appointments to Council. Recruitment panels will normally include two members plus the Clerk.
- To appoint members to act as a disciplinary panel as set out in the Green Book and as an appeals panel in the case of any appeal against disciplinary action.
- To appoint members to hear any formal grievance.
- To review health and safety at work for all Council employees.
- To review all Council polices that relate to staff employment on an annual basis.

- To ensure the Council complies with all legislative requirements relating to the employment of staff.

9. Review

This Terms of Reference document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 10th August 2023, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term, nominally 4 years.

Signed: Dated: 10th August 2023

Cllr S Peacock, Chairman of the Council

Appendix H

Title	Procurement Policy
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 10th August 2023

HOLDING PAGE

ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF LAND POLICY

1 Introduction

Western Valley Parish Council is committed to developing its landholding for the benefit of its residents. From time to time opportunities may arise which will enable the Council to acquire land, through donation, purchase, or lease. The Council may also decide to sell, or lease land should opportunities which benefit residents, arise.

As custodians of the parish land for future generations such opportunities will be carefully considered however decision making in this regard will be firmly predisposed towards retaining parish land in most instances.

The Council will be especially disinclined to dispose of land when, if developed, there might be negative impacts on the well-being of residents, the environment and the character of the parish as a whole including those areas in close proximity to the land in question.

Any acquisitions or disposals will be to support the aims of the Council's vision and our residents.

2 Considerations in all circumstances

The Parish Council will need to consider and take into account the following:

1. That Government legislation (as detailed in this document) is understood and used as a basis for decision-making.
2. To consider best value for the public purse.
3. To consider how they will demonstrate that maximum consideration has been given to the disposal or sale of land.
4. To consider that land cannot be disposed of for less than it is worth without the consent of the Secretary of State so knowing the value of the land is important to establish in the first instance.
5. To consider an open and transparent bidding process where required and certainly when there is more than one party interested in the disposal.
6. To consider how and when they will advertise the disposal or sale.
7. To consider what the land is currently appropriated for.
8. To consider if the land falls within the exceptional reappropriations and disposals guidance.
9. To consider if such a disposal promotes economic, social or environmental wellbeing, with a limit of £2million between the unrestricted value and the disposal value. If not, the parish Council could not dispose of the land without the permission of the Secretary of State and in any case would need to know the value of the land prior to considering any disposal, if for no other reason than to formally confirm the Council are not breaching the £2million limit. The Council would need to contact either the District Valuer or a Land Consultant/Agent for a valuation.

10. To consider on a case by case basis the valuation of the land – the Council could instruct and pay for the District Valuer or a Land Consultant/Agent to value the land.
11. To consider on a case by case basis and ask the proposed purchaser to pay for the valuation as this may demonstrate a commitment. The prospective purchaser would need to be fully informed however, that the final decision to dispose or sale of land would rest with the Council as the Corporate Body, so in paying for the evaluation there is no guarantee a disposal of land for example by sale or swap would take place.
12. To consider if the land has recently been valued and proper advice already taken.

3 Section 1 – Acquisition Of Land

The Parish Council are happy to look at ways in which to increase their portfolio of parish Council owned land/open space for the benefit of the community.

Opportunities to obtain further land can come from Developers or via the District or County Council. This land/open space is normally gifted to the parish Council in most cases for the benefit of the community.

Where land is identified as open space not owned by the Parish Council but is not currently being maintained to the standard that we would hope. The Council will often look to see if there is anything that can be done to improve the area in the first instance by contacting the owner.

3.1 Procedure for acquiring land

1. Any request to acquire land for the use of public open space will be added to the next available parish Council agenda by the Clerk.
2. The Clerk will produce a report to Council setting out the proposed acquisition, what the land is currently appropriated for, details of the current owner and what proper advice if any is recommended that the Council should consider for example, to obtain a land valuation, budget and delegation to the Clerk will be by resolution of the Council for this activity.
3. The Clerk will also request a resolution as to how the residents are to be informed and consulted.
4. The Clerk will also request a resolution from the Council to make contact with the current owner to gauge their intention for the land and to establish its history for example, has it been used for storing toxic substances, are there any hazards, ponds etc, and to ask if the Council could obtain the land for the benefit of the community.
5. Once the Clerk receives information from the current owner a report will be completed to Council for their next Parish Council meeting. This will detail if a land acquisition is an option and under what terms. The Clerk will ask the Council for an indication as to whether the Council still wishes to proceed to the next stage, i.e. to acquire the land by resolution.

6. If the Council do not wish to continue with a sale at this stage the process will stop, and the current owner will be informed that the parish Council does not wish to proceed with the acquisition of the land.
7. If the Council still wish to acquire the land, there is a need at this stage for the Council to consider the future cost and upkeep of the land, the Clerk will write a report for Council for their next meeting.
8. If the Council still wish to acquire the land, they will consider employing a Solicitor, the Clerk will ask the Council for a resolution to contact a Solicitor to deal with the acquisition of the land.
9. The Council will then formally decide at the meeting whether it wishes to confirm its intention to acquire the land based on the solicitor's advice.
10. Once the formal resolution is made that the land is to be acquired, the Clerk will request delegated authority to deal with the administrative matters of the acquisition through to its legal conclusion along with the Solicitor.

4 Section 2 – Disposal Of Land

The Parish Council will not actively seek to dispose of land unless there are sound justifications to do so. The Parish Council values its land/open spaces as part of the fabric of the village and in most cases the monetary value of the land cannot match the amenity value to local residents..

4.1 Procedure for disposing of land, whether by approach or choice

1. The request/proposal will be added to the next available Parish Council agenda by the Clerk.
2. The Clerk will produce a report to Council setting out the proposal, what the land is currently appropriated for and what proper advice is recommended that the Council should consider for example a valuation of the land and/or instructing a Land Agent.
3. In the first instance, a valuation of the land is required, budget and delegation to the Clerk will be by resolution of the Council.
4. Once the Clerk received the valuation a report will be completed to Council for their next parish Council meeting. This will detail the proposal to dispose, the intended use once disposed and the price of the land. The Clerk will ask the Council for an indication as to whether the Council still wishes to proceed to the next stage, i.e. to establish by resolution the Council's intention to dispose of the land by way of a sale as set out in the report.
5. If the Council do not wish to continue with a sale at this stage the process will stop, and the prospective buyer will be informed that the parish Council does not wish to proceed with the sale of the land.
6. If the Council still wish to sell the land, the Council will then formally decide at the meeting whether it wishes to confirm its intention to sell the land based on the valuation, the nature of the proposed use of the land, any objections received and any other factors the Council considers relevant.
7. Once the formal decision in principle to dispose of the land is made, the Council will follow the process below.

4.2 Disposal Methods

When it comes to selling land, there are a variety of different methods and strategies the Parish Council could use to achieve the highest price and best value for the community. One of these options is to work with a Land Agent and the Parish Council will rely upon professional advice.

After the decision in principle to dispose of the land is made the following process will be followed:

1. advertise the intention to dispose of the land for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and on the Parish Council website, notice boards and Facebook page inviting any objections to be submitted to the Clerk.
2. Once the deadline for responses has passed the Clerk will draw up a further report to Council ready for their next meeting, including any objections submitted (redacted under GDPR) or confirm that no objections have been received.
3. The Council will then formally decide at the meeting whether it wishes to confirm its intention to dispose of the land based on the valuation, the nature of the proposed use of the land, any objections received and any other factors the Council considers relevant.
4. Once the formal resolution is made that the land is to be disposed, including price the Clerk will request delegated authority to deal with the administrative matters of the lease, swap, sale etc, through to its legal conclusion along with the appropriate solicitors

4.3 Disposal Criteria

The Council will be inclined to dispose of land when one or more of the following apply:

1. the financial advantage for the parish meets the financial tests described above.
2. the Council's current or future liability for maintenance and repair outweighs the current or future amenity the land provides for residents.
3. disposal facilitates broader projects which the Council deems to be for the benefit of residents.
4. disposal allows other recognised charitable or not for profit organisations to consolidate landholding for the public good. e.g. Woodlands Trust, Canals and Waterways, National Trust etc.
5. the parish land provides no current discernible amenity to residents nor uncommon environmental advantage for flora or fauna.
6. the value of the land is unlikely to increase beyond inflation, taking into account current market forces, foreseeable additional local developments and national initiatives.
7. disposal will contribute to the vision of the Council and the Councils' medium-term planning objectives.

The Council will be disinclined to dispose of land when one or more of the following apply:

1. the land's location and current condition add visual amenity.
2. the land has potential to provide opportunity for sport, leisure, or recreation activities
3. the land contributes to the environmental distinctiveness of the area.
4. the land or and its current condition adds to the cultural and heritage dimension of the landscape.
5. the land currently provides useful access routes to residents.
6. acquisition of the land by a third party is likely to facilitate land use which conflicts with the principles established in the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan

These lists are for guidance purposes and not exhaustive

5 Review

The Acquisition and Disposal of Land Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 10th August 2023, it shall be reviewed once per Council term or unless legislation dictates.

Signed: Dated: 10th August 2023

Cllr S Peacock , Chairman of the Council

Western Valley
Parish Council

Appendix H

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

1. Introduction

This document sets out the way Western Valley Parish Council has delegated powers and responsibilities. This document is one of the four major ways in which the Council regulates its affairs; the others are its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Statement of Internal Control.

The power to delegate functions is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s101.

The intention of the delegation scheme is to allow the Council to act with all reasonable speed. Decisions should be taken at the most suitable level. Therefore, the Clerk is given powers over the day-to-day administration of the Council or committees to decide matters within the Terms of Reference and matters of major policy should be recommended to the full Council.

Whilst delegation is necessary it is the Council's policy that members and the press and public should have the fullest information. Therefore, the Clerk reports all major decisions taken under delegated powers at the next Council or Committee meeting.

2. Proper Officer, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

The Clerk shall be:

- The Proper Officer and will carry out the functions as provided by the Local Government Act 1972
- The RFO in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations in force at any given time.
- The DPO as required by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018

3. Delegated Powers and Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities set out in the Clerk's job description, the Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- Day to day administration of services
- Authorisation to call any extra meetings of the Council, or Committee, as necessary, having consulted with the Chairman of the Council or Committee
- Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence, requiring or requesting information or relating to previous decisions of the Council but not correspondence requiring an opinion to be taken by the Council or Committee
- Authorisation of routine expenditure in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations
- Preparation and submission of Planning application consultation responses where the Council's agreed stance is known.

- Handling requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1988 or GDPR Regulations
- Issuing press releases and statements on the Council's known policies
- Updating and managing the content of the Council's website
- Co-ordinating the Council's newsletter articles e.g. for Facebook or other requests for articles.
- Disposal of Council records according to legal restrictions and the Council's Retention Policy
- Take appropriate actions arising from emergencies in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Council as appropriate to the circumstances.
- An emergency situation is defined as a time when the Council cannot act under its normal standing orders due to circumstances outside of its control.

4. Emergency Situations

To note that it is lawful for the Clerk to spend against specific items in the Parish Council's budget i.e., for contractors, hall hire, salaries etc., all of which having been identified in the budget when setting the precept, any such payments to be reported to the Council and Finance Committee at the next ordinary meeting of each.

The Council approves delegation of the following items to the Proper Officer

- Clerk may spend up to £500 and to authorise urgent work when unforeseen circumstances occur.
- Clerk may spend up to £5000 and to authorise urgent work when unforeseen circumstances occur, with written confirmation from the Chairman / Vice Chairman or Chairman of a specific committee.
- To respond to planning applications having consulted with Members of the Planning Committee, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman. (Other councillors are still able to submit their own personal comments) where a response is required before an ordinary meeting of the Planning Committee can be held.
- To postpone meetings of the Council, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman or Committee Chairman, as appropriate, for example where a meeting maybe inquorate.
- To receive and act upon Government advice in relation to the holding of the Annual Meeting of the Parish (noting such meetings must be held before 1 June) and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (noting such a meeting must be held in May), thereby giving delegated power to the Clerk to make necessary rearrangements for these meetings in consultation with the Chairman.

All work actioned under the Scheme of Delegation is done in consultation with at least a quorum of members except for general day to day responsibilities of the Clerk, everything actioned will also be documented, and reported at the next appropriate meeting.

5. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 10th August 2023, it shall be reviewed periodically, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Signed: Dated: 10th August 2023

Cllr S Peacock, Chairman of the Council

Western Valley
Parish Council

Appendix I

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

For the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

1. Scope of the Responsibility

1.1. Western Valley Parish Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

1.2. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

2.1. The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2.2. The system of internal control is in place at the Council from date of approval for the year ending 31st March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts in accordance with proper practice.

3. The Internal Control Environment

3.1. The Council

3.1.1. The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful.

3.1.2. The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its November and December meetings. The December meeting of the Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

3.1.3. The Council monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters.

3.1.4. The full Council normally meets monthly and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the Clerk.

3.1.5. The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

3.2. Clerk to the Council & Responsible Financial Officer

3.2.1. The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and polices are adhered to.

3.3. Payments

3.3.1. All payments are reported to the Finance Committee for approval. Two members of the Committee must authorise all payments.

3.4. Risk Assessments / Risk Management

3.4.1. The Council carries out regular risk assessment in repost of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

3.5. Internal Audit

3.5.1. The Council has appointed an independent Internal Auditor for the year 2023/2024 who will report to the Council on the adequacy of its records, procedures, systems, internal controls and risk management. The effectiveness of the internal audit is reviewed annually.

3.6. External Audit

3.6.1. The Council has been appointed External Auditor Moore until further notice. Following completion of the External Audit the annual Certificate of Audit is provided, which is presented to the Council.

3.7. Internal Controls Checklist

3.7.1. The Council uses the attached Internal Controls Check List to monitor the application of the internal controls throughout the year (Appendix 1).

3.7.2. The Internal Controls Councillor (ICC) is selected randomly from the pool of Councillors each quarter, no Councillor may complete the check more than once per year. The ICC for the quarter carries out the checks included on this checklist and the Council receives a report from the ICC at the following main meeting.

4. Review of Effectiveness

4.1. Western Valley Parish Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal controls. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls is monitored and informed by:

4.1.1. the Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer

4.1.2. the work of the Independent Internal Auditor

4.1.3. the External Auditors through the Annual Return and their annual letter

4.1.4. the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

5. Review of the Statement

This statement was accepted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 10th August 2023 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed: Dated: 10th August 2023

Cllr S Peacock; Chairman of the Council

Appendix 1

Western Valley

Parish Council

Internal Controls Checklist

Internal Controls Method	ICC Initials & Date			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Accounting records: • All credits and payments are inputted into the accounting software immediately. • All transactions are shown to be cross referenced against bank statements. • Receipts are issued where required/requested. ***Method:*** *randomly selected invoices to be cross referenced against Financial Report, Day Book and Bank Statements. Review any outstanding invoices.*				
Payments: • All invoices for payment are printed and filed, invoices are attached to each Scribe entry. • All payments are listed in the Financial Report and approved at each meeting of the full Council. • The Financial Report is included in the meeting minutes. ***Method:*** *randomly selected invoices to be cross referenced with the relevant meeting minutes to confirm Council approval, and verify included in Scribe.*				
Cheques: • All cheque stubs are signed by two Councillors • Cheque numbers are included on the invoice and the Financial Report. ***Method:*** *cross reference random cheque payments with invoices and the relevant meeting minutes to confirm Council approval.*				
VAT: • The accounting software separates VAT amounts for relevant invoices. • VAT is reclaimed quarterly. ***Method:*** *check the Day Book for invoices that include VAT.*				
BANK RECONCILLIATION: • The cashbook is checked against the monthly bank statements. • The account balance is included on the Financial Report. • All unpresented cheques are listed in the Financial Report. ***Method:*** *check that all Bank Statements have been cross referenced with transactions in the Day Book and that the account balance values are the same.*				