WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

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 Chair 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 Chair/Vice Chair 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 Chair / Vice Chair or Chair of a specific committee.
- To respond to planning applications having consulted with Members of the Planning Committee, including the Chair and Vice Chair. (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 Chair and Vice Chair or Committee Chair, 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 Chair.

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 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

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. Chair
The Chair 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 Chair 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.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

- 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 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term, nominally 4 years.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

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 Chair will be elected by the Planning Committee at its first meeting after the Annual Council meeting, they may also appoint a Vice-Chair. 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. The Clerk shall issue the meeting papers and summons to all Councillors for every meeting, for the event that a substitution shall be made.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

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.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

6. Review

This Terms of Reference document was reapproved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026,

Cllr , Chair of the Council

Appendix D

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Bollards Working Group
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Remit

- To create the detailed specification for the "Community Art Bollards Project", for tender.
  - To liaise with local Parish Councils for community cohesion and approach.
- To review the tenders, make recommendation to the Council on chosen design.
- To liaise with the chose artist, throughout the design and consultation phase (including public consultation)
- To advise the council on preferred options and phasing.

2. Frequency of Meetings

To meet as required to support the remit and scope of the Bollards Working Group.

3. Appointment of members

The Working Group will be comprised at least 3 members three members with a quorum of not less than three – please see the council standing orders for calculation of quorum, if membership exceeds 9. Membership of the bollards working group will be agreed as needed at a full council meeting, the Bollards Working group may not appoint its own members.

4. Delegated Authority

The Bollards Working Group has no delegated authority, decision regarding chosen artist, design to go to consultation, and chosen design & timescales to be decided at the next available full council meeting.

5. Scope

- To provide the same specification to all bidding artists
- Meet with all artists, with site visits.
- Review bids.
- Advise the council on the preferred bid.
- Engage with the successful artist to review the design, providing any additional information required.
- Liaising with the artist through working Group review of the designs, Parish Council review of the designs and submission to public consultation.
- Management of the Public Consultation and analysis of the results.
- Liaising with artists for modifications post-consultation.
- Advising the council on the preferred design and implementation.

6. DRAFT Specification for the Landscape Architects

Note: the final specification to be written by the working group, and submitted to the Council for formal approval.

Locations for the Bollards: Primarily in the district centre, to prevent anti-social parking.

The Working Group to fully scope all of the locations to include. To consider all locations where ad-hoc parking, rather than residents parking will occur, for example outside the Best-One, Greenfinch Road, which is within the Didcot TC boundary, and therefore will require liaison with Didcot TC.

Bollard Specification: Working Group to define the exact specification, ensuring compliance with all Oxfordshire County Council Highways requirements, including but not limited to height, impact protection, spacing etc. To ensure the bollards meet the requirement to be decorative/art installation, not standard bollards. To mitigate against issues in replacing the bollards in the event they are damaged, the design needs to facilitate easy replacement without heavy machinery. Points to consider, bollards to remove the ability for anti-social parking, but without impeding the ability for pedestrians of all mobility capabilities to safely cross roads, mount pavements, and go about their day to day business.

7. Deliverables of the Working Group

Working through a process to create the exact specification/artists brief first, receive feedback from community members, then some rough drawings for Full Council, then feedback from the full Council, then final drawings with enough detail (though can also be 'mood board' style if you feel best) so that we then can meaningfully consult with the village. We would then try to consolidate feedback and seek any further comments/ideas from the chosen landscape architect based on what the local folks said.

8. Review

This Terms of Reference document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

, Chair

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Committee
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

Western Valley Parish Council has determined that it intends to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Neighbourhood Plan Committee to oversee the process.

2. Purpose & Mission Statement

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee ("the NPC") is to design and facilitate a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for Western Valley Parish, in order to achieve the respective vision for this Parish.

The process will be:

- **Inclusive** – offering everyone who lives or works in Western Valley opportunities to participate fully in the plan.
- **Comprehensive** - identifying all the important aspects of life in Western Valley for which we need to plan for the future.
- **Positive** – bringing forward proposals which will improve the quality of life in Western Valley.
- **Supported** – where there is a need for professional support to complete the process.

3. Remit

The NPC, along with its technical advisers, will undertake the following tasks:

- Prepare an outline process for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan to encourage participation and the submission of views and ideas.
- Organise meetings to gather views and consult on ideas.
- Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Paris..
- Liaise with relevant businesses and organisations to secure their input in the process.
- Ensure that the views of the full range and diversity of interest Groups are sought through the process, as far as this is reasonably possible.
- Analyse the views, ideas and proposals received during the planning process and use them to prepare a draft Plan.
- Keep the Council fully informed of progress and, where appropriate, present NPC Meeting Minutes for acceptance and subsequent adoption.

4. Frequency of Meetings

To meet as required to support the remit and scope of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

5. Appointment of members

The Committee will be comprised at least three members, including one Councillor, with a quorum of not less than three – please see the council standing orders for calculation of quorum, if membership exceeds 9. Membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee will

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

be agreed as needed at a full council meeting, the Neighbourhood Plam Working Group may not appoint its own members.

Technical advisors present at any meeting will not have voting rights.

6. Delegated Authority

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee has delegated authority to draft the neighbourhood plan, including initial consultations of the parish. The final draft will be brought to the next available full council meeting for approval, prior to submission to the district council. The committee has delegated powers to spend up to the value of the Earmarked reserves on appropriate professional advice, consultations, publications etc.

7. Secretarial Arrangements

Each meeting shall nominate a Secretary/minute taker. The sole duty of the Secretary is to provide Minutes of each Meeting. A different member can be nominated as Secretary/minute taker for each meeting. The Clerk to the Council may be the minute taker, if they are available.

Meeting Minutes must be revived by the Council at the next available meeting after the minutes have been approved.

.

8. Review

This Terms of Reference document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

, Chair

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

INTRODUCTION

Generally, these standing orders do not duplicate the content of legislation. Where direct references are used, they are referenced. This document has been complied using the NALC *MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2025 UPDATE (ENGLAND)* Items that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.

b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.

d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.

f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.

g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.

h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.

i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.

j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.

k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
   i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
   ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
   iii. to make a point of order;
   iv. to give a personal explanation; or
   v. to exercise a right of reply.

p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.

q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.

r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
   i. to amend the motion;
   ii. to proceed to the next business;
   iii. to adjourn the debate;
   iv. to put the motion to a vote;
   v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
   vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
   vii. to exclude the public and press;
   viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
   ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.

s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.

t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed (   ) minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

● a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

● b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**

● c **The minimum three clear days' public notice of a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting.**

● ● d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**

e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 10 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.

g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

i A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.

j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.

k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

● ● l **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any** other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**

n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**

o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**

p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**

q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**

r **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.

s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

i. the time and place of the meeting;
ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
vi. if there was a public participation session; and
vii. the resolutions made.

u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter**

being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.

v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**

c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:

i. shall determine their terms of reference;
ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer (   ) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee;
vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**

b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**

c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**

d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**

e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**

f **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**

h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;

iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**

b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**

c The chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.

d If the chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or a sub-committee.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least six clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least six clear days before the meeting.

e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.

h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
ii. to move to a vote;
iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
viii. to require a written report;
ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**

b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in** paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**

c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).

c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but this view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

● ● ● e **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**

f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.

f A dispensation request shall confirm:

i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;

iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and

iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.

h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:

i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;

ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or

iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a **Upon notification by the Principal Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall:

i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee** or a sub-committee,
   - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
   - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

   See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least ( ) days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;

iii. convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;

iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**

v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**

vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;

vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;

viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;

ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);

x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);

xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also standing order 23);

xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;

xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;

xv. refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council or Planning Committee;

xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and

xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also standing order 23).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".

b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.

c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:

i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;

ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;

iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and

which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:

i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.

e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
   i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
   ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
   iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
   iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
   v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** or due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
c. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
   i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;

ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

d. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

e. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council OR the Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 11.

b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the Council and/or Staffing Committee or, if they are not available, the vice-chair relevant body of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to Staffing Committee at its next meeting.

c The chair of Staffing Committee or in their absence, the vice-chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk to the Council. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by Staffing Committee.

d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff (or other members of staff) shall contact the chair of the Staffing Committee or in their absence, the vice-chair of the Staffing Committtee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.

e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk to the Council relates to the chair or vice-chair of the Staffing Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.

f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**

b. **This Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**

c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**

d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**

e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**

f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.

b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the District and County Council OR Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.

b Unless the Council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council OR Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
   i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
   ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.

b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.

c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.

d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

27. Urgent Business

a To delegate the power to deal with urgent matters which could not go before the council, a committee or a sub-committee to the Clerk – see scheme of delegation.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

28. Review

These Standing Order based on the NALC Model Standing Orders 2025, were approved for use at the annual meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed every year at the Annual Council meeting as in 5 j ix above.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026,

Cllr Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Contents

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on [enter date].

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

1. General

1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. They are one of the Council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.

1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.

1.4. In these Financial Regulations:

- 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
- "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
- "Authorise" refers to a decision by the Council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
- 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
- *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
- 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the Council cannot change.
- 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the Council to its members and staff.

1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the Council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the Council;
- administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and control systems;
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.6. **The Council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**

- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the Council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £250.

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. **The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the Council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the Council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the Council.

2.4. **At least once a year, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair , or a regular payment approver shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Council.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The Council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

3. Accounts and audit

3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**

- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate;**
- **a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council;**

3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the Council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.5. **The Council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices**.

3.6. **Any officer or member of the Council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary.

3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.

3.8. The Council shall ensure that the internal auditor:

- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
- reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the management or control of the Council

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the Council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;

- provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or

- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the Council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually in the budget setting meeting for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council.

4.3. No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.

4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Council {finance committee} not later than the end of October each year.

4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Council.

4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and forecast, the Council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The Council shall set a precept for this amount no later than [the end of January] for the ensuing financial year.

4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**

4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.

4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.

4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the Council {or relevant committee}.

5. Procurement

5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.

5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.

5.3. Every contract shall comply with the Council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.

5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**

5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the Council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:

5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £25,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**

5.8. For contracts greater than £5,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least three fixed-price quotes;

5.9. where the value is between £500 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates {which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.}

5.10. For smaller purchases, the Clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.

5.11. **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**

5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;

iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;

iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the Council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

5.14. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £250 excluding VAT.
- the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT.
- the Council for all items over £1,000;

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order {unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the Council} or make any contract on behalf of the Council.

5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council except in an emergency.

5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £5,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the Clerk.

6. Banking and payments

6.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the Council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The Council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust and Redwood bank. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

6.2. The Council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the Council's bank.

6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the Council before being certified by the Clerk.

6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking, and by cheque only in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with a resolution of the Council, unless the Council resolves to use a different payment method.

6.6. For each financial year the Clerk may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the Council may authorise in advance for the year.

6.7. This schedule of regular payments shall be annotated with the voucher number each payment - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments, and verified by the internal controls councillor each quarter.

6.8. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:

i. {any payments of up to £250 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget}.

ii. payments of up to £5,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.

iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Council, where the Clerk certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

iv. Fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

6.9. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the Council. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the Council shall identify all councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process.

7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the Council's bank accounts online.

7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the Council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.

7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be available in Scribe to all authorised signatories.

7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.

7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.

7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online, by initialling and dating the notes of each payment in Scribe..

7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next council meeting and included in the minutes.

7.9. With the approval of [the Council] in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the Council at least every two years.

7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the Council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the Council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

7.11. If thought appropriate by the Council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the Council at least every two years.

7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by two of the Clerk and a member. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.

7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the Council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.14. Remembered password facilities should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Payment cards

8.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

8.2. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

9. Petty Cash

9.1. The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

10. Payment of salaries and allowances

10.1. **As an employer, the Council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**

10.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**

10.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the Council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council {or relevant committee}.

10.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

10.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.

10.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by [the finance committee] to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

10.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the Council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

10.8. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

11. Loans and investments

11.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

11.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

11.3. The Council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

11.4. All investment of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

11.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

11.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

12. Income

12.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk.

12.2. The Council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The Clerk shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the Council.

12.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council by the Clerk and shall be written off in the year. The Council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.

12.4. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be deposited intact with the Council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.

12.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

12.6. Any repayment claim under section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 shall be made quarterly where the claim exceeds £100 and at least annually at the end of the financial year.

12.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

13. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

13.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.

13.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

14. Assets, properties and estates

14.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council.

14.2. The Clerk shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the Council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

14.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

14.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

15. Insurance

15.1. The Clerk shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the Council's review of risk management.

15.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

15.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers {in consultation with the Clerk}.

15.4. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council.

16. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

16.1. The Council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of Clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the Council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

16.2. The Council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the Council to act unlawfully.

16.3. The Council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Appendix 1 - Tender process

1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the Council.
3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the Council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the Council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
6) Where the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

17.Notes

These Regulations were based on the NALC Model Financial Regulations 2025 template. The template was produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in March 2025 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this document are correct at time of publication. NALC cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent topublication.

18.Approval

These regulations were approved at the council meeting on 14th May 2026 as applicable for the remainder of FY 2026-2027. They will be reviewed annually, or when legislation dictates.

Signed Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Adoption of the Vale of White Horse & South Oxfordshire District Council Model Code of Conduct

The Oxfordshire Secretaries and Monitoring Officers Group recently agreed a model Code of Conduct Appendix 1 to this document to be applied on a countywide basis and which is intended to provide consistency across all tiers of local government.

At their respective annual meetings in 2022, both the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils adopted the Code with immediate effect. Vale of White Horse then formally commended the Code to this Council for adoption at the earliest possible opportunity. This will ensure that all Oxfordshire councillors are covered by the same Code.

Western Valley Parish Council therefore adopts the Code of Conduct as per Appendix 1 to this document.

2. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

Appendix 1 follows.

Vale of White Horse District Council

South Oxfordshire District Council
Listening Learning Leading

Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022

1.0 Introduction

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council, and formally adopt a code of conduct, in accordance with the *Localism Act 2011*.

2.0 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a Councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow Councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all Councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of the Councillor and in Local Government.

3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "Councillor" means a member or co-opted member of the local authority. A "co-opted member" is defined in the *Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4)* as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

3.1 is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;

3.2 is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub- committee of the authority;

<u>and</u> who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee".

4.0 General Principles of Councillor Conduct

Everyone in public office and all who serve the public or deliver public services, including Councillors and local authority officers, should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, (see Appendix A).

Building on these principles of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and integrity and leadership, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of Councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in Councillors, on all occasions a Councillor shall:

- act with integrity and honesty
- act lawfully

- treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.
- impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest
- exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

These general principles have been incorporated into the obligations of the Code of Conduct as set out below.

5.0 Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of Councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a Councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a Councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a Councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a Councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including at face-to-face meetings, at online or telephone meetings, in written communication, in verbal communication, in non-verbal communication and in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish Councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

6.0 Standards of Councillor Conduct

This section sets out the obligations (in bold below), which are the minimum standards of conduct required of a Councillor. Should a Councillor's conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against them, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is also included below each obligation to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

6.1 Respect

A Councillor:

6.1.1 Shall treat everyone, including other Councillors and members of the public with respect.

6.1.2 Shall treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a Councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in Councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from everyone. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the relevant social media provider and/or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

6.2 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

A Councillor:

6.2.1 Shall not bully any person.

6.2.2 Shall not harass any person.

6.2.3 Shall promote equalities and not discriminate against any person.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as; conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Legislation places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

6.3 Impartiality of Officers of the Council

A Councillor:

6.3.1 Shall not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral, (other than political assistants where applicable). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. A Councillor may question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, a Councillor must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

6.4 Confidentiality and access to information

A Councillor:

6.4.1 Shall not disclose information either given to them in confidence by anyone or acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless

- **i. They have received the consent of a person authorised to give it; or**
- **ii. They are required by law to do so; or**
- **iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
- **iv. the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and also made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority and consultation with the**

Monitoring Officer has taken place prior to its release.

6.4.2 Shall not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of their role as a Councillor for the advancement of themselves, their friends, family members, employer or business interests.

6.4.3 Shall not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

6.4.4 When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Council shall have due regard to any professional advice provided by the Council's Officers.

6.5 Disrepute

A Councillor:

6.5.1 Shall not bring their role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other Councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions.

6.6 Use of position

A Councillor:

6.6.1 Shall not use, or attempt to use, their position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone.

A Councillor should not take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and privileges to further their own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

6.7 Local authority Resources and Facilities

A Councillor:

6.7.1 Shall not misuse council resources.

6.7.2 Shall, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others, act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or

of the office to which they have been elected or appointed.

A Councillor may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist them in carrying out their duties as a Councillor. Examples may include office support, stationery, equipment such as phones, computers and transport and access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

6.8 Compliance with the Code of Conduct

A Councillor:

6.8.1 Shall undertake Code of Conduct training as required by the local authority.

6.8.2 Shall cooperate with any Code of Conduct assessment, investigation, hearing and/or determination.

6.8.3 Shall not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

6.8.4 Shall comply with any sanction imposed on them following a finding that they have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for a Councillor to demonstrate high standards, to have your actions open to scrutiny and not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint, you should raise this with the Monitoring Officer.

7.0 Registering and Declaring Interests

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

7.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

A Councillor must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State (see Appendix B), where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners. Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the Council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you must disclose the fact that you have an interest but do not have to disclose the nature of it. (A sensitive interest is an interest which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, if disclosed, could lead to the Councillor, or a person connected with them, being subjected to violence or intimidation.) You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting.

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Council's register, or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, by the Monitoring Officer, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up to date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Appendix B is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

7.2 Other Registerable Interests

You must also register your other registerable interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of taking office and ensure these are kept up to date by notifying any changes within 28 days.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Appendix C), you must disclose the interest.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

7.3 Non-Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to your financial interest or wellbeing and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests at 7.1 above, or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***affects*** your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out at 7.2 above and appendix C you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;

b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have a Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

8.0 Gifts and Hospitality

A Councillor:

8.1 Shall not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

8.2 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

8.3 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept.

The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality but there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case, you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered.

You do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a Councillor.

It is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a Councillor.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

“**Disclosable Pecuniary Interest”** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in the table below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i)) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were

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

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

Appendix C: Disclosure of Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

a) any unpaid directorships

b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority

c) any Body

(i) exercising functions of a public nature
(ii) directed to charitable purposes or
(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that a person other than a member of the council may have about Western Valley Parish Council's administration and procedures. It applies to Parish Council's employees. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council. Formal complaints of conduct by councillors should be made to and investigated by Vale of White Horse District Council.

2. Complaints on Policy Decisions

Complaints against policy decisions made by the council or any of its committees shall be referred back to council in accordance with Item 7 of the council's standing orders, which provides as follows:

a Except where significant relevant new facts or an error come to light, a resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

3. Oral Complaints

If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the council's employees is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk to the council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk to the council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk of the council they should be advised to put it to the chair of the council.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

4. Complaints Procedure

a) On receipt of a written complaint the chair of the council or the clerk to the council (except where the complaint is about their own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

b) Where the clerk to the council receives a written complaint about the clerk to the council's own actions, they shall refer the complaint to the chair of council. The clerk to the council shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

c) The clerk to the council or chair of council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the council. The clerk to the council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter be related to grievance, disciplinary or standard board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under confidential business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).

d) The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.

e) As soon as practicable after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

f) A council shall defer dealing with any written compliant only if it is of the opinion that issues of law and practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received

5. Review

The Complaints Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed yearly, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

PRIVACY POLICY / STATEMENT

When you contact **Western Valley Parish Council,** hereafter called "The Council"

The information you provide (personal information such as name, address, email address, phone number) will be processed and stored so that it is possible to contact you and respond to your correspondence, advise, provide information, send invoices and receipts relating to service provision.

Your personal information will not be shared with any third party without your prior consent.

The Council – Right to Process Information

GDPR Article 6 (1) (a) (b) and (c)

Processing is with consent of the data subject

or

Processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation

or

Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject or to take steps to enter into a contract

Information Security

The Council has a duty of care to ensure the security of personal data. We make sure that your information is protected from unauthorised access, loss, manipulation, falsification, destruction or unauthorised disclosure. This is done through appropriate technical measures and relevant policies.

We will only keep your data for the purpose it was collected for and only for as long as is necessary, after which it will be deleted or shredded.

Your Rights

Access to Information

You have the right to request access to the information we have on you. You can do this by contacting us by email or post. You will be required to provide proof of identity.

Information Correction

If you believe that the information we have about you is incorrect, you may contact us so that we can update it and keep your data accurate.

Information Deletion

If you required the Council to delete the information about you, please contact us.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Right to Object

If you believe that your data is not being processed for the purpose it has been collected for, you may object, please contact us

Rights Related to Automated Decision Making and Profiling

The Council does not use automated decision making or profiling of personal data.

To Sum Up

In accordance with the law, we only collect a limited amount of information about you that is necessary for correspondence, information and service provision. We do not use profiling, we do not sell or pass your data to third parties. We do not use your data for purposes other than those specified. We make sure your data is stored securely. We delete all information deemed to be no longer necessary. We constantly review our Privacy Policies to keep it up to date in protecting your data.

Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026,

Cllr , Chairman

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Purpose

Western Valley Parish Council is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses the personal data of staff, and to meeting our data protection obligations. This policy sets out the council's commitment to data protection, and your rights and obligations in relation to personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

This policy applies to the personal data of current and former job applicants, employees, workers, contractors, and former employees, referred to as HR-related personal data. This policy does not apply to the personal data relating to members of the public or other personal data processed for council business.

The council has appointed the Clerk to the Council as the person with responsibility for data protection compliance within the council. Questions about this policy, or requests for further information, should be directed to

2. Definitions

"Personal data" is any information that relates to a living person who can be identified from that data (a 'data subject') on its own, or when taken together with other information. It includes both automated personal data and manual filing systems where personal data are accessible according to specific criteria. It does not include anonymised data.

"Processing" is any use that is made of data, including collecting, recording, organising, consulting, storing, amending, disclosing or destroying it.

"Special categories of personal data" means information about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation and genetic or biometric data as well as criminal convictions and offences.

"Criminal records data" means information about an individual's criminal convictions and offences, and information relating to criminal allegations and proceedings.

3. Data Protection Principles

The council processes HR-related personal data in accordance with the following data protection principles the council:

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

- processes personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- collects personal data only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- processes personal data only where it is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of processing Data Protection Policy 2025 21st May 2025
- keeps accurate personal data and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that inaccurate personal data is rectified or deleted without delay
- keeps personal data only for the period necessary for processing
- adopts appropriate measures to make sure that personal data is secure, and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and accidental loss, destruction or damage

The council will tell you of the personal data it processes, the reasons for processing your personal data, how we use such data, how long we retain the data, and the legal basis for processing in our privacy notices.

The council will not use your personal data for an unrelated purpose without telling you about it and the legal basis that we intend to rely on for processing it. The council will not process your personal data if it does not have a legal basis for processing. T

he council keeps a record of our processing activities in respect of HR-related personal data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

4. Processing

Personal Data

The council will process your personal data (that is not classed as special categories of personal data) for one or more of the following reasons:

- it is necessary for the performance of a contract, e.g., your contract of employment (or services); and/or
- it is necessary to comply with any legal obligation; and/or
- it is necessary for the council's legitimate interests (or for the legitimate interests of a third party), unless there is a good reason to protect your personal data which overrides those legitimate interests; and/or
- it is necessary to protect the vital interests of a data subject or another person; and/or
- it is necessary for the performance if a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.

If the council processes your personal data (excluding special categories of personal data) in line with one of the above bases, it does not require your consent. Otherwise, the council is required to gain your consent to process your personal data. If the council asks for your consent to process personal data, then we will explain the reason for the request. You do not need to consent or can withdraw consent later.

The council will not use your personal data for an unrelated purpose without telling you about it and the legal basis that we intend to rely on for processing it.

Personal data gathered during the employment is held in your personnel file in hard copy and electronic format on HR and IT systems and servers. The periods for which the council holds your HR-related personal data are contained in our privacy notices to individuals.

Sometimes the council will share your personal data with contractors and agents to carry out our obligations under a contract with the individual or for our legitimate interests. We require those individuals or companies to keep your personal data confidential and secure and to protect it in accordance with Data Protection law and our policies. They are only permitted to process that data for the lawful purpose for which it has been shared and in accordance with our instructions.

The council will update HR-related personal data promptly if you advise that your information has changed or is inaccurate. You may be required to provide documentary evidence in some circumstances.

The council keeps a record of our processing activities in respect of HR-related personal data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Special Categories of Data

The council will only process special categories of your personal data (see above) on the following basis in accordance with legislation:

- where it is necessary for carrying out rights and obligations under employment law or a collective agreement;
- where it is necessary to protect your vital interests or those of another person where you are physically or legally incapable of giving consent;
- where you have made the data public; • where it is necessary for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims;

- where it is necessary for the purposes of occupational medicine or for the assessment of your working capacity;
- where it is carried out by a not-for-profit body with a political, philosophical, religious or trade union aim provided the processing relates to only members or former members provided there is no disclosure to a third party without consent;
- where it is necessary for reasons for substantial public interest on the basis of law which is proportionate to the aim pursued and which contains appropriate safeguards;
- where is it necessary for reasons of public interest in the area of public health; and
- where is it necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest or scientific and historical research purposes.

If the council processes special categories of your personal data in line with one of the above bases, it does not require your consent. In other cases, the council is required to gain your consent to process your special categories of personal data. If the council asks for your consent to process a special category of personal data, then we will explain the reason for the request. You do not have to consent or can withdraw consent later.

5. Individual Rights

As a data subject, you have a number of rights in relation to your personal data.

Subject Access Requests

You have the right to make a subject access request. If you make a subject access request, the council will tell you:

- whether or not your data is processed and if so why, the categories of personal data concerned and the source of the data if it is not collected from yourself;
- to whom your data is or may be disclosed, including to recipients located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and the safeguards that apply to such transfers;
- for how long your personal data is stored (or how that period is decided);
- your rights to rectification or erasure of data, or to restrict or object to processing;
- your right to complain to the Information Commissioner if you think the council has failed to comply with your data protection rights; and
- whether or not the council carries out automated decision-making and the logic involved in any such decision-making.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

The council will also provide you with a copy of your personal data undergoing processing. This will normally be in electronic form if you have made a request electronically, unless you agree otherwise.

If you want additional copies, the council may charge a fee, which will be based on the administrative cost to the council of providing the additional copies.

To make a subject access request, you should send the request to the Clerk or Chair of the Council. In some cases, the council may need to ask for proof of identification before the request can be processed. The council will inform you if we need to verify your identity and the documents we require.

The council will normally respond to a request within a period of one month from the date it is received. Where the council processes large amounts of your data, this may not be possible within one month. The council will write to you within one month of receiving the original request to tell you if this is the case.

If a subject access request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, the council is not obliged to comply with it. Alternatively, the council can agree to respond but will charge a fee, which will be based on the administrative cost of responding to the request. A subject access request is likely to be manifestly unfounded or excessive where it repeats a request to which the council has already responded. If you submit a request that is unfounded or excessive, the council will notify you that this is the case and whether or not we will respond to it.

Other Rights

You have a number of other rights in relation to your personal data. You can require the council to:

- rectify inaccurate data;
- stop processing or erase data that is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing;
- stop processing or erase data if your interests override the council's legitimate grounds for processing data (where the council relies on our legitimate interests as a reason for processing data);
- stop processing or erase data if processing is unlawful; and
- stop processing data for a period if data is inaccurate or if there is a dispute about whether or not your interests override the council's legitimate grounds for processing data.

- complain to the Information Commissioner. You can do this by contacting the Information Commissioner's Office directly. Full contact details including a helpline number can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website (www.ico.org.uk).

To ask the council to take any of these steps, you should send the request to the Clerk or Chair of the Council.

6. Data Security

The council takes the security of HR-related personal data seriously. The council has internal policies and controls in place to protect personal data against loss, accidental destruction, misuse or disclosure, and to ensure that data is not accessed, except by employees in the proper performance of their duties.

Where the council engages third parties to process personal data on our behalf, such parties do so on the basis of written instructions, are under a duty of confidentiality and are obliged to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security of data.

Impact assessments

Some of the processing that the council carries out may result in risks to privacy (such as monitoring of public areas via CCTV). Where processing would result in a high risk to your rights and freedoms, the council will carry out a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) to determine the necessity and proportionality of processing. This will include considering the purposes for which the activity is carried out, the risks for yourself and the measures that can be put in place to mitigate those risks.

Data breaches

The council have robust measures in place to minimise and prevent data breaches from taking place. Should a breach of personal data occur the council must take notes and keep evidence of that breach.

If you are aware of a data breach you must contact the Clerk or Chair of the Council immediately and keep any evidence, you have in relation to the breach.

If the council discovers that there has been a breach of HR-related personal data that poses a risk to the rights and freedoms of yourself, we will report it to the Information Commissioner within 72 hours of discovery. The council will record all data breaches regardless of their effect.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, we will tell you that there has been a breach and provide you with information about its likely consequences and the mitigation measures we have taken.

International data transfers

The council will not transfer HR-related personal data to countries outside the EEA.

Individual responsibilities

You are responsible for helping the council keep your personal data up to date. You should let the council know if data provided to the council changes, for example if you move to a new house or change your bank details.

Everyone who works for, or on behalf of, the council has some responsibility for ensuring data is collected, stored and handled appropriately, in line with the council's policies.

You may have access to the personal data of other individuals and of members of the public in the course of your work with the council. Where this is the case, the council relies on you to help meet our data protection obligations to staff and members of the public. Individuals who have access to personal data are required:

- to access only data that you have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not to disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the council) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure (for example by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, including password protection, locking computer screens when away from desk, and secure file storage and destruction including locking drawers and cabinets, not leaving documents on desk whilst unattended);
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the council's premises without prior authorisation and without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device; and
- not to store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for work purposes.
- to never transfer personal data outside the European Economic Area except in compliance with the law and with express authorisation from the Clerk or Chair of the Council

- to ask for help from the council’s data protection lead if unsure about data protection or if you notice a potential breach or any areas of data protection or security that can be improved upon.

Failing to observe these requirements may amount to a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Significant or deliberate breaches of this policy, such as accessing personal data without authorisation or a legitimate reason to do so or concealing or destroying personal data as part of a subject access request, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

7. Review

The Data Protection Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed yearly, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION POLICY

1. Introduction

Western Valley Parish Council is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. It complies with the requirements of all this legislation.

From 25 May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 took effect (GDPR).

Many requests for information can be dealt with in the ordinary course of business and do not need to be processed under any of the above legislation. If the information can be provided immediately, or can be made available routinely, then we will do this. Please check our website, or noticeboards, first to see if the information is available before making any request. It is also worth looking at the Information Commissioner's website at www.ico.org.uk which has guidance for the public on making requests.

2. The contact details for making a request

Clerk to the Council,
Western Valley PC
PO Box 4311
READING
RG8 1DD

or email: Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk

3. Data Protection Act 2018

We will acknowledge receipt of a request for personal information as soon as possible. As long as the information is not subject to exemptions (or contains personal data relating to third parties) we will provide a written response within one month.

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, we will provide you with a statement, or copies of data, as long as:

- it is "personal data" as defined by Durant v Financial Services Authority (2003) that is, truly personal, not merely incidental mention of a person, and within a structured, relevant filing system;
- it is not exempt from disclosure;
- we have been able to verify your identity; and
- you have not repeatedly requested the information in a short space of time.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

4. Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the right of access under GDPR?

The GDPR clarifies that the reason for allowing individuals to access their personal data is so that they are aware of (and can verify the lawfulness of) the processing. It also allows them to check the accuracy of the data held and to challenge why it is necessary for the data to be held.

Is there a fee for dealing with a subject access request under GDPR?

No. A copy of the information will be provided free of charge. However, a 'reasonable fee' can be charged when a request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, particularly if it is repetitive.

A reasonable fee can also be charged to comply with requests for further copies of the same information. This does not mean that there can be charges for all subsequent access requests.

The fee will be based on the administrative cost of providing the information.

What is the timescale for responding to a request?

Under the GDPR the information should be provided without delay and at the latest within one month of receipt of the request.

The period of compliance can be extended by a further two months where requests are 'complex or numerous'. If this is the case, the individual will be informed within one month of the receipt of the request with an explanation as to why the extension is necessary.

What if the request is manifestly unfounded or excessive?

Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, in particular because they are repetitive, we can:

- charge a reasonable fee taking into account the administrative costs of providing the information; or
- refuse to respond.

Where we refuse to respond to a request, we will explain why to the individual, informing them of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without undue delay and at the latest within one month.

How will the information be provided?

We will verify the identity of the person making the request using 'reasonable means'.

If the request is made electronically, we will endeavour to provide the information in a commonly used electronic format.

The GDPR introduces a new best practice recommendation that, where possible, organisations should be able to provide remote access to a secure self-service system which provide the individual with direct access to his or her information. This is not appropriate for all organisations and we do not yet have this type of facility. The right to obtain a copy of information, or to access personal data through a remotely accessed secure system, must not adversely affect the rights and freedoms of others.

What about requests for large amounts of personal data?

The GDPR permits us to ask the individual to specify the information the request relates to.

The GDPR does not introduce an exemption for requests that relate to large amounts of data, but we can consider whether this makes the request manifestly unfounded or excessive.

5. Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOI")

Timescales and ways of making requests

We will respond to an FOI request in 20 working days counting the first working day after the request is received as the first working day. An FOI request can be made by anyone, from anywhere, for any purpose. It must be in writing and there must be a return address to send the information to. We will confirm or deny whether we hold the information within the 20 days. If we do not hold the information we will explain why not. We will let you know if we need longer than 20 days to apply the public interest test and we will tell you at that point what exemptions we are looking at and how long we think we need. If we do need more time to apply the public interest test this will be up to a maximum of a further 20 working days so the total time will be a maximum of 40 working days.

Refusal

We may refuse a request if we consider that:

- it is vexatious (designed to cause disruption or annoyance rather than having a serious purpose, see below)
- to comply would exceed the statutory cost limit (£450 with staff time charged at £25 an hour which is the statutory rate). If we believe it will exceed the cost limit we will issue a refusal notice and invite the applicant, if possible, to revise the request to make it less expensive.
- it falls within an exemption under the legislation (see below)

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Charging

We can charge for photocopying and disbursements and can request these fees in advance by issuing a fees notice within twenty working days of receipt of the request. When the fees notice is issued the time limit for responding stops. If we do not receive the fee within three months we are not obliged to comply with the request.

Clarification

We can seek clarification about what is being requested. The time limit for responding stops whilst we wait for a response to our request for clarification.

Exemptions

The most common exemptions are:

- Section 21 – information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. There is a duty to confirm or deny whether we hold it and to tell the requestor where they can find it. This is an absolute exemption which means the public interest test does not need to be applied, (see below).
- Section 22 – information intended for future publication. This means it is in draft, still being worked on but when completed, or approved, it will be published. The public interest test must be applied here.
- Section 31 – prejudicial to law enforcement (preventing crime, collecting tax)
- Section 36 – prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs
- Section 40 – personal data
- Section 42 – legal professional privilege
- Section 43 – commercial sensitivity

All except section 21 are qualified exemptions requiring the application of the public interest test. This means weighing up whether the public interest is best served by disclosing the information, or not disclosing it.

6. Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR")

Environmental information broadly relates to:

- Air, atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape, plants, animals, biological diversity and genetically modified organisms
- Emissions, discharges, noise, energy, radiation, waste, recycling, and pollution
- Measures and activities such as policies, plans and agreements
- Reports, cost benefit analysis and economic analysis
- The state of human health and safety, contamination of the food chain
- Cultural sites and built structures (the effect of the environment on the
- human world)

- Planning and development, building control, construction and renovation, floods and flooding issues, land use, traffic, parking, location of mobile phone masts and demolition of buildings

It covers documents, photos or maps. There is no distinction between formal approved documents, and anything else. The duty is to make the information **available.** This is not the same as the duty to disclose under FOI.

There are 20 working days to respond to the request. Unlike FOI there is no extension to the time limit for consideration of the public interest test. A further 20 days is permitted though if the request is complex, or there is a large amount of information involved. There is no right to charge for inspection. Cost recovery is permitted with reasonable charges published in advance.

Exceptions

There are exceptions to the requirement to disclose, these exceptions are subject to the public interest test like FOI. The exceptions are:

- personal data
- information not held when the request was made
- the request is manifestly unreasonable (similar to “vexatious” under FOI but with “manifestly unreasonable” used instead. The courts have treated both in the same way)
- the request is too general
- information is in draft or is unfinished
- information is an internal communication
- disclosure would adversely affect the course of justice or commercial confidentiality.

There is a lot of guidance, and case law, on the use of both FOI exemptions and EIR exceptions which can be found on the Information Commissioner’s website at www.ico.org.uk.

7. Publication Schemes

This is a scheme available via the website, setting out the classes of information that will be made routinely available and any charges. This includes policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information. This information is easily and quickly available.

8. Internal Review

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been dealt with you may request an internal review. This will be carried out within 20 working days of the request for a review being received. If you remain unhappy with the result of the review you can ask the

Information Commissioner to look at your concerns. We will provide you with details of the internal review process when you request it. The process will vary depending on the type of request and who is available to review the process within the timescales.

9. Vexatious Requests

Whilst Western Valley Parish Council wishes to be open and transparent and to provide as much information as possible about the work it does there are occasions when it might be necessary to decide that a request is “vexatious” within the meaning of the legislation. There have been a number of legal cases which have helped to clarify what is meant, legally, by “vexatious” and which have stated that parish councils have limited resources and that their obligations under the legislation must be proportionate to those resources.

Public authorities do not have to comply with vexatious requests. There is no requirement to carry out a public interest test or to confirm or deny whether the requested information is held.

The key question is whether the request is likely to cause **a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress.** There is no exhaustive list of circumstances. Every case is unique and judged within the context and history of that specific situation.

“Vexatious” Indicators

- Abusive or aggressive language
- Burden on the authority
- Personal grudges
- Unreasonable persistence
- Unfounded accusations
- Intransigence
- Frequent/overlapping requests
- Deliberate intention to cause annoyance
- Scattergun approach
- No obvious intent to obtain information
- Futile requests

Process we will follow to determine if a request is vexatious

The parish clerk deals with all requests for information on behalf of the Parish Council. If a request is considered to be potentially vexatious the clerk will prepare a summary setting out the context and history to the request. This summary will be reviewed by the Parish Council.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

The review

The following will be considered:

- The purpose and value of the request
- Whether the purpose and value justifies the impact on the public authority
- The context and history so, for example, if there has been a long and frequent series of requests the most recent request, though not obviously vexatious in itself, will contribute to the aggregated burden.
- Have there been numerous follow-up enquiries no matter what is supplied? This will be balanced against how clear our responses have been, has contradictory or inconsistent information been supplied or is a legitimate grievance being pursued?
- Whether there are alternatives to the vexatious route. If it is too expensive then section 12 (costs in excess of £450) will be used. The Information Commissioner permits the total costs for all requests from one person (or several acting in concert) to be aggregated during a period of sixty days so long as they are requests for similar information.
- Is this a round robin, a "fishing" expedition or part of an orchestrated campaign? None of these make it vexatious but are factors.

Final Warning

If, having considered all of the above, the Parish Council thinks there is a case for treating the request as vexatious then consideration will be given to a "final warning". This is a letter, or email, to the person making the request explaining the impact the request(s) are having and asking that their behaviour be moderated. This "final" warning will not be appropriate in all cases but, if it is possible that the person making the request has not appreciated the impact of what they are doing, then it may assist.

Advice and Assistance

In addition the Parish Council may want to ask the person making the request whether advice and assistance would help in clarifying what exactly they wish the organisation to provide. Again this may not be appropriate in every circumstance but will be considered.

Report to the Parish Council

The history of the matter will go forward as part of a report to the Parish Council setting out the evidence and reasoning behind the recommendation to propose that the request be treated as vexatious.

The decision to declare a request vexatious will be taken by the Parish Council. This decision should be taken within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This time limit should be achievable in normal circumstances, however, if there is no meeting scheduled within that timescale then the decision will be formally delegated by the adoption of this policy to the Chair of the Council [in consultation with the vice Chair]. In a small parish it is not possible

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

for there to be an internal review process once the Parish Council has reached the decision that the request is vexatious.

Under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act the refusal notice will set out our internal review procedure (if one is available) and the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. However, under section 17(6) if the authority has issued a previous refusal notice for a vexatious request (and it would be unreasonable to provide another one) it is not necessary to do so. This will be done where the complainant has already been warned that further requests on the same, or similar topics, will not receive any response.

Please note that if a request is found to be vexatious and further requests are received on the same topic no response will be provided.

10. Review

The Requests for Information Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed yearly, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. Introduction

The following schedule details the information available from Western Valley Parish Council.

Note also that hardcopy documents may be viewed at no cost by prior arrangement with The Clerk.

This document should be read in conjunction with the council's policy on requests for information.

2. Schedule

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class1 – Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only	Hard copy and/or website	
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address)	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)	(hard copy and/or website)	
Current and previous financial year as a minimum	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Finalised budget	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Precept	Website and VoWHDC Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Grants given and received	Part of budget	
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Members' allowances and expenses	Part of income & expenditure	

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	(hard copy or website)	
Annual Report to Parish Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous council year as a minimum	(hard copy or website)	
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Website Part of Minutes of Meetings	Free
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website Hardcopy Copies are posted on Parish Notice Boards at least three clear days in advance of meetings	Free See Scheme Free
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Reports presented to council meetings – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website See Minutes page of web site Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Responses to consultation papers	Hardcopy	See Scheme
Responses to planning applications	Via VoWHDC Web site	As per VoWHDC
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only	(hard copy or website)	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Code of Conduct Policy statements	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Information security policy	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme

Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Data protection policies	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	See Scheme	
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Assets Register	Hardcopy	See Scheme
Register of members' interests	VoWHDC website Hardcopy only	Free See Scheme
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hardcopy only	See Scheme
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Currently None		
Additional Information This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Risk Register	Website Hardcopy	Free See Scheme

3. Contact Details

Clerk to the Council,

Western Valley PC

PO Box 4311

READING

RG8 1DD

or email: Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk

www.WesternValleyParish.gov.uk

4. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026 it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

A Retention Schedule is a list of records that need to be kept by Western Valley Parish Council for a specific length of time.

This schedule contains recommended retention periods for records created and maintained by the Parish Council and refers to all information regardless of the media in which it is stored, such as manual files, photographs, electronic files, tapes or microfiche.

The aim of the Retention Schedule is to provide a consistent approach to the way the Council handles its records and provide a clear set of guidelines.

A Retention Schedule serves the purpose of identifying records that may be worth preserving permanently as a part of a local authority archive as well as preventing the premature destruction of records that need to be retained for a specific legal, financial or statutory period.

This Retention Schedule details the function of each record, the type of records that may fall within this function and the length of time the Council should hold the record before taking disposal or archive action.

Many retention periods are determined by statute.

In conclusion good Records Management is not difficult; simply put, the Council needs to keep accurate and timely records for the appropriate period of time, making sure that obsolete records are securely disposed of in an appropriate manner.

2 Retention of Documents Policy

The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council.

This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

Scope Responsibilities
Retention Schedule

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

2.1 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

A small percentage of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

2.2 Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and s/he is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

2.3 Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which it creates in the course of its business. The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

The Clerk is expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored. When a Councillor wishes specific email correspondence to be retained beyond the 6 month retention period, they should inform the clerk, who will retain the requested emails on the Council's systems until the following deletion process, when they will reconfirm whether the emails should continue to be retained.

2.4 Retention of Documents

Document	Minimum	Retention Reason
Minute Books / Minutes	Indefinite	Archive
Accounts / Annual return	7 years	Audit
Bank statements	7 years	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit	Management
Paying in books	Last completed audit	Management
Tenders / Quotations	7 years	Audit
Paid invoices	7 years	Audit
VAT records	7 years	Audit
Salary records	7 years	Audit
Tax & NI records	7 years	Audit
Insurance policies	2 years	Audit
Certificate of Employers Liability	40 years	Audit / legal
Certificate of Public Liability	40 years	Audit / legal

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Assets register	7 years	Audit
Deeds / Leases	Indefinite	Archive
Electoral Register	1 year	As replaced
Personnel records	6 years after employment ceases	Audit / management
Declaration of acceptance	Term of office + 1 year	Management
Register of interests	Term of office + 1 year	Management
Complaints	1 year	Management
General information	6 months	Management
Routine correspondence and emails	6 months	Management

2.5 Planning Applications

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at Vale of White Horse District Council. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council Minutes and are retained indefinitely and are held on the VoWHDC Planning Portal. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated above.

3 Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026,

Cllr , Chairman

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

COMMUNICATION & MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent without bias the interests of the whole community.

They will always try and do their best and are available to help parishioners with regard to matters relating to the Civil Parish of Western Valley.

Parish Councillors may be contacted via the Clerk or using their Parish Council email addresses.

If it is felt by the parishoner that the matter is important, then a letter or email to the Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner (also see the Correspondence section below).

It is the Parish Council's intention to meet the timescales detailed below but there could be occasions when this is not possible. When this happens the Parish Council will review their procedures and where necessary make changes to the policy or procedures.

2. Aims

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners, and the media, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in a timely manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

3. Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council normally meets 6 times per year, starting at the May meeting, generally meeting every other month. Additional meetings may be scheduled as necessary.

The Parish Council will normally meet in a room at The District Centre, in the Civil Parish of Western Valley from 7.45pm.

Public participation will generally start at 7:45pm to enable discussion on agenda items, 10 minutes is reserved for this, with the meeting starting immediately after.

Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the formal meeting or wishing to record the meeting must make the Chair aware of their wish before the meeting starts.

The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating and workspace will be made available. The Press may record meetings in accordance with the Openness of Local

Government Regulations 2014. This is set out in more detail in Standing Orders (section 3. L, m and n), and the Recording of Meetings Policy.

The Council's Committees are also open to the public. See the parish website for details of Committees, meeting locations and meeting times.

4. Notice Boards

The following items will be displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard(s):

- Contact details for the Clerk
- The Parish Council's meeting agenda - which will be posted at least 3 clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Agenda of other committee meetings of the Parish Council - which will be posted at least 3 clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Statutorily required notices such as Electors Rights, Notices of/for Elections etc.

Where possible, any other parish council notice boards around the village will also be kept up to date, however the board outside the District Centre the official noticeboard to meet statutory requirements.

5. Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance either via email at Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk or via post to Western Valley Parish Council, PO Box 4311 READING, RG8 1DD. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practically possible. However, all Parish Councillors have their own Council email addresses which have the format firstinitial.lastname@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on anything relevant to Councillors or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and, if otherwise, will always be copied to the Clerk. All new email requiring data to be passed on may be followed up with a data consent request before action is taken with that correspondence. Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with villagers in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, with a copy to the Clerk.

It is important to note that any emails sent to Parish Council email addresses will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act requirements.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

It is imperative that all correspondents never forward personal information on to other people or groups outside the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

All correspondence to the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged within one week of receipt if possible. If email is used, then an acknowledgment will be sent via email.

Councillors will be notified of correspondence, but the addressee will not be named on minutes of meetings. Anonymous correspondence in any form will be recorded as received but not responded to.

Email should be thought of in the same way as a letter. A subject line, the sender's name and the content should be in the main body of the email, not as an attachment. Attachments will not be opened unless the Clerk has prior knowledge of the subject. The Council regrets that, for reasons of computer security and virus protection, anonymous emails, and those with no subject in the title will not be opened or actioned.

A parishioner may raise any issue directly with the Parish Clerk or any Councillor. If a satisfactory answer cannot be given immediately in line with the known policies of the council, the issue may be placed on the agenda for the attention of the full Council.

The Clerk will acknowledge all Freedom of Information requests within seven working days and will reply fully within 20 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, a further holding letter/email will be sent with an expected completion date.

6. Website

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the agenda and associated papers to be posted on the Parish Council website (WesternValleyParish.gov.uk) at least three clear days before the meeting and for the draft Minutes to be posted as soon as possible, and no later than one month, after the meeting. The final Minutes will be posted as soon as possible after being confirmed by Council or the relevant committee.

In order to comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, the Clerk will arrange for the annual publication of the following documents no later than 1 July each year:

a) all items of expenditure above £100
b) end of year accounts
c) annual governance statement
d) internal audit report
e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
f) the details of public land and building assets
g) Minutes, agendas, and meeting papers of formal meetings.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

The Parish Clerk is the Webmaster and Domain Administrator for the Parish Council website. The Parish Clerk will ensure that the Parish Council email address is publicised.

7. Social Media

The use of social media by the Clerk, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, does not replace existing forms of communication but is used to enhance interaction with a wider range of the population.

8. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is convened by the Chair of the Parish Council and is generally held in April each year to provide parishioners with a summary of the activities of the Parish Council over the previous year and the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Retention Policy
- Policy on Requests for Information
- Recording of Meetings Policy

10. Contact With the Media

The Clerk and Members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media. Data Protection is of the highest priority. There are a number of personal privacy issues for the Clerk and Members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details may be in the public domain); disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Clerk before any response is made to the media.

Confidential documents, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action taken. When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's Solicitor before any response is made.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

All formal requests for comment regarding policies on any matter should be directed to the Clerk in the first instance. If unavailable, the Chair should be contacted. When responding to approaches from the media, the Clerk or Chair are authorised to interact with the media.

All written responses to the Press should be drafted by the Clerk with the assistance of the Chair, or other appointed Councillor for accuracy and lawfulness.

If a member is contacted directly by the Press, Councillors are at liberty to communicate with the Press in their own right but must ensure that they always make it clear that they speak as individuals and not on behalf of the Parish Council. As stated above only the Clerk, can speak formally on behalf of the Council.

Members should not initiate contact with the media on Council related matters unless approved by the Council.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example, to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk.

11. Press Releases

The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial. The Clerk or any Member may draft a press release, however it must be issued by the Clerk or approved by the full Council for issue. This is to ensure that the principles outlined above are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.

12. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 14th May 2026 it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed: Dated: 14th May 2026

Cllr , Chair of the Council

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

Appendix L

Mr O Glover MP
Member of Parliament for Didcot & Wantage
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Western Valley Parish Council
PO Box 4311
READING
RG8 1DD

15th May 2026

Sent by e-mail.

Dear Mr Glover

RE: Urgent Decision Required on Healthcare Provision Funding for Great Western Park and Valley Park

On behalf of the Western Valley Parish Council, I am writing regarding the long-outstanding issue of healthcare provision for the communities of Great Western Park and Valley Park within the Vale of White Horse district.

These developments have now been under construction and occupied for well over a decade, with the occupancy of Valley Park growing almost daily. During this period, thousands of residents have moved into the area, yet the healthcare infrastructure intended to support this population growth has still not materialised. Residents continue to experience significant pressure on local GP services, and the originally identified healthcare site remains unbuilt many years after first occupancy began.

The Parish Council understands that the trigger point for the developer's next healthcare contribution payment is now approaching. Given the length of time already elapsed, we believe it is imperative that a clear and urgent decision is made regarding the future of these funds and the delivery of healthcare infrastructure for the area.

We therefore ask Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and our local Member of Parliament to work together urgently with all relevant stakeholders to:

- confirm the current status of the proposed healthcare facility;
- clarify whether the planned building project will proceed within a realistic and deliverable timeframe; and
- if delivery of the original facility is no longer viable, ensure that the developer healthcare contributions are redirected without delay toward expansion, redevelopment, or provision at the existing surgery site or another suitable local healthcare solution.

Residents of Great Western Park and Valley Park have waited many years for the healthcare provision that was expected to accompany these developments. It is essential that the available funding is now used decisively and transparently to secure meaningful healthcare capacity for the community.

We would welcome a written response outlining the intended next steps and anticipated timescales for decision-making and delivery.

Yours Faithfully,

Mrs Laura White
Clerk to the Council
For and on behalf of Western Valley Parish Council.

Appendix M

Title	Finance 2025-2026
Author	Responsible Financial Officer
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14th May 2026

25.1. To approve finalised payments list for February and March 2026

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
90	13/02/2026	£ 10.08	£ 2.02	£ 12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
92	13/02/2026	£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
94	13/02/2026	£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
101	13/02/2026	£ 10,000.00	£ -	£ 10,000.00	Grant	SOFEA
102	13/02/2026	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	Logo	Laura White
103	26/02/2026	£ 5.83	£ 1.17	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	OpenAI OpCo, LLC
99	28/02/2026	£ 6.00	£ -	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		£ 371.00	£ -	£ 371.00	Total Staff Costs	
		£ 10,528.90	**£ 5.18**	**£ 10,534.08**	**Total February**	
Voucher No	**Date**	**Net**	**VAT**	**Total**	**Description**	**Supplier**
91	13/03/2026	£ 10.08	£ 2.02	£ 12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
93	13/03/2026	£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
95	13/03/2026	£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
104	13/03/2026	£ 5.83	£ 1.17	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	OpenAI OpCo, LLC
107	15/03/2026	£ 432.50	£ 86.50	£ 519.00	OALC Membership Fees	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
98	30/03/2026	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ 3,000.00	Training Course	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
100	31/03/2026	£ 7.00	£ -	£ 7.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		£ 896.60	£ -	£ 896.60	Total Staff Costs	
		£ 4,388.00	**£ 91.68**	**£ 4,479.68**	**Total March**	

25.2. To note receipts for February and March 2026.

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Customer
8	31/03/2026	£ 644.35	£ -	£ 644.35	Bank Interest	Unity Trust

25.3. To note the reconciled bank balances, up to 28th February and 31st March 2026.

February 2026

	Bank Reconciliation at 28/02/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025			91,350.57
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026			52,965.76
				144,316.33
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2025 - 28/02/2026			23,554.59
A	**Cash in Hand 28/02/2026** (per Cash Book)			**120,761.74**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	28/02/2026	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current	28/02/2026	3,761.74	
	Unity Trust Reserve	28/02/2026	117,000.00	
				120,761.74
	Less unpresented payments			
				120,761.74
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**120,761.74**
	A = B Checks out OK			

Image shows:

A Cash in Hand = £120,761.74

B Adjusted Bank Balances = £120,761.74

A equals B, and Checks out OK.

Unity Trust Current Account Balance £3,761.74

Unity Trust Reserve Account Balance £117,000.00

Appendix M

March 2026

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025			91,350.57
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026			53,610.11
				144,960.68
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/03/2026			28,034.27
A	**Cash in Hand 31/03/2026** (per Cash Book)			**116,926.41**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	31/03/2026	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current	31/03/2026	1,000.00	
	Unity Trust Reserve	31/03/2026	115,926.41	
				116,926.41
	Less unpresented payments			
				116,926.41
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**116,926.41**
	A = B Checks out OK			

Image shows:

A Cash in Hand = £116,926.41

B Adjusted Bank Balances = £116,926.41

A equals B, and Checks out OK.

Unity Trust Current Account Balance £1,000.00

Unity Trust Reserve Account Balance £115,926.41

Appendix M

25.4. To approve the annual accounts for 2025/2026, including:

- Variances Report
- Statement Of Accounts
- Reserve Balances
- ~~Report on Restated Values~~

See following Pages.

There is no report on restated values this year.

25.5. To approve the S137 Report, and note no CIL Report applicable to this Council this year.

See following Pages.

Western Valley Parish Council

ANNUAL RETURN - Section 2 : Statement of Accounts

Explanation of variances

This is prepared based on information in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils : a Practitioner's Guide"

Important note: These figures have been prepared on a RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS basis.

Box No.	Description	31/03/2025 £	31/03/2026 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Notes
1	Balances brought fwd	61387	91351				BALANCE B/F AGREES
2	Annual precept	50188	50188	0	0%	No	N/A
3	Total other receipts	1954	3422	1468	75%	Yes	See Accompanying Report
4	Staff Costs	3522	5063	1541	44%	Yes	See Accompanying Report
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	0	0%	No	N/A
6	Total other payments	18657	22971	4314	23%	Yes	See Accompanying Report
7	Balances carried forward	91351	116926	25576	28%	Yes	See Accompanying Report
8	Total Cash and Short Term Investments	91351	116926	25576	28%	Yes	See Accompanying Report
9	Total Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments	3211	3211	0	0%	No	N/A
10	Total Borrowings	0	0	0	0%	No	N/A

This report is intended as a guide to the variances you may need to explain. The specific requirements vary between external auditors so please check the requirements shown on the pro forma provided to your council

Please note a breakdown of approved reserves will also be required if the total reserves (Box 7) figure is more than twice the annual precept value (Box 2)

Box 3 Variances Explanation

FY 2024-2025 Total	£	1,954.19
FY 2025-2026 Total	£	3,422.11
Difference	£	1,467.92
Percentage Difference		75 %

The increase in the Box 3 receipts of approximately £1,500 is majoritively due to:
1) In year VAT Refund £776.63
2) Bank Interest, on a greater value of reserves, total increased by £690.77

For the full calculation as to the difference please see full extract of data below.

FY 2024-2025 Box 3 Data

Customer	Date	Total	Description
Unity Trust	31/12/2024	£ 585.17	Bank Interest
Unity Trust	30/09/2024	£ 462.52	Bank Interest
Unity Trust	30/06/2024	£ 350.53	Bank Interest
Unity Trust	31/03/2025	£ 555.97	Bank Interest
		£ 1,954.19	**Total Box 3**

FY 2025-2026 Box 3 Data

Customer	Date	Total	Description
HMRC	01/05/2025	£ 776.63	VAT Refund
Unity Trust	30/06/2025	£ 629.40	Bank Interest
Unity Trust	30/09/2025	£ 649.56	Bank Interest
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	21/11/2025	£ 0.52	MS365
Unity Trust	31/12/2025	£ 721.65	Bank Interest
Unity Trust	31/03/2026	£ 644.35	Bank Interest
		£ 3,422.11	**Total Box 3**

Box 4 Variances Explanation

FY 2024-2025 Total	£	3,521.90
FY 2025-2026 Total	£	5,062.92
Difference	£	1,541.02
Percentage Difference		44 %

The increase in the Box 4 staff expenditure of approximately £1,500 is majoritively due to:
1) Increase in number of hours worked by the Clerk, due to additional projects.

NOTE: Clerk is paid hours worked, which is still far below contracted hours, whilst there is a significant variance it is still within the set staffing budget of the Council.

For the full calculation as to the difference please see full extract of data below.

FY 2024-2025 Box 4 Data

Customer	Date	Total	Description
Various	April 2024	£ 169.55	Total Staff Costs
Various	May 2024	£ 410.76	Total Staff Costs
Various	June 2024	£ 48.80	Total Staff Costs
Various	July 2024	£ 356.74	Total Staff Costs
Various	August 2024	£ 45.80	Total Staff Costs
Various	September 2024	£ 348.69	Total Staff Costs
Various	October 2024	£ 372.79	Total Staff Costs
Various	November 2024	£ 444.96	Total Staff Costs
Various	December 2024	£ 331.57	Total Staff Costs
Various	January 2025	£ 25.00	Total Staff Costs
Various	February 2025	£ 434.05	Total Staff Costs
Various	March 2025	£ 533.19	Total Staff Costs
		£ 3,521.90	**Total Box 4**

FY 2025-2026 Box 4 Data

Customer	Date	Total	Description
Various	April 2025	£ 275.77	Total Staff Costs
Various	May 2025	£ 422.11	Total Staff Costs
Various	June 2025	£ 92.11	Total Staff Costs
Various	July 2025	£ 559.67	Total Staff Costs
Various	August 2025	£ 37.40	Total Staff Costs
Various	September 2025	£ 925.71	Total Staff Costs
Various	October 2025	£ 82.20	Total Staff Costs
Various	November 2025	£ 833.85	Total Staff Costs
Various	December 2025	£ 8.10	Total Staff Costs
Various	January 2026	£ 558.40	Total Staff Costs
Various	February 2026	£ 371.00	Total Staff Costs
Various	March 2026	£ 896.60	Total Staff Costs
		£ 5,062.92	**Total Box 4**

Box 6 Variances Explanation

FY 2024-2025 Total	£ 18,657.11	
FY 2025-2026 Total	£ 22,971.35	
Difference	£ 4,314.24	
Percentage Difference	23	%

The increase in the Box 6 total other payments of approximately £4,300 is majoritively due to:
1) Increase in training costs + £4,492
2) Decrease in Noticeboard Costs - £1,730
3) Increase in SLCC Costs + £212
4) Increase in Granting + +£1,416

For the full calculation as to the difference please see full extract of data below, organised approximately by cost description to group similar costs.

FY 2024-2025 Box 6 Data

Supplier	Date	Total	Description	
Laura White	15/04/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/05/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/06/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	15/07/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/08/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/09/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	15/10/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	15/11/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/12/2024	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/01/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/02/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/03/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Total				**£ 312.00**
Eyelid Productions Ltd	13/09/2024	£ 100.00	Website	
Total				**£ 100.00**
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	13/09/2024	£ 64.01	SLCC Membership	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	13/09/2024	£ 208.22	SLCC Conference	
Total				**£ 272.23**
Starboard Systems Limited t/a Scribe Accounts	15/07/2024	£ 489.60	Scribe	
Total				**£ 489.60**
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	14/02/2025	£ 269.99	Remote Access Equipment	
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	14/02/2025	£ 9.99	Remote Access Equipment	
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	17/03/2025	£ 285.99	Remote Access Equipment	
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	17/03/2025	£ 9.97	Remote Access Equipment	
Total				£ 575.94
Royal British Legion	11/10/2024	£ 50.00	Remembrance Sunday	
Total				**£ 50.00**
Royal Mail	15/07/2024	£ 424.20	PO Box	
Total				**£ 424.20**
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	03/03/2025	£ 459.16	OALC Membership Fees	
Total				**£ 459.16**
Signs of Cheshire Limited	17/12/2024	£ 705.00	Noticeboard	
Signs of Cheshire Limited	04/02/2025	£ 705.00	Noticeboard	
Noel Carter	17/03/2025	£ 305.00	Noticeboard	
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	17/03/2025	£ 15.20	Noticeboard	
Total				**£ 1,730.20**
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/04/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/05/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/06/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/07/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/08/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/09/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/10/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/11/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/12/2024	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/01/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/02/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/03/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Total				**£ 148.32**
Vale of White Horse District Council	15/04/2024	£ 328.58	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	15/07/2024	£ 188.40	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	11/10/2024	£ 242.23	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	17/12/2024	£ 26.91	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	20/01/2025	£ 69.98	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	04/03/2025	£ 5.38	Meeting Room Hire	
Total				**£ 861.48**
Laura White	13/09/2024	£ 8.00	Logo	
Total				**£ 8.00**
HM Land Registry	45702	14	Land Registry Documents	

FY 2025-2026 Box 6 Data

Supplier	Date	Total	Description	
Amazon EU S.a.r.l., UK Branch	17/11/2025	£ 20.97	Wreath	
Maxi-Retail	17/11/2025	£ 3.99	Wreath	
Tanar LTD	17/11/2025	£ 12.65	Wreath	
Total				**£ 37.61**
Laura White	14/04/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	15/05/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/06/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/07/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/08/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	15/09/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	14/10/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	14/11/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	14/12/2025	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	14/01/2026	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/02/2026	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Laura White	13/03/2026	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	
Total				**£ 312.00**
Eyelid Productions Ltd	12/09/2025	£ 100.00	Website	
Total				**£ 100.00**
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	11/07/2025	£ 72.00	Training Course	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	12/09/2025	£ 400.00	Training Course	
Breakthrough Communications and Strategies Limited	06/11/2025	£ 540.00	Training Course	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	17/11/2025	£ 160.20	Training Course	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	17/11/2025	£ 160.20	Training Course	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	17/11/2025	£ 160.20	Training Course	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	30/03/2026	£ 3,000.00	Training Course	
Total				**£ 4,492.60**
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	23/01/2026	£ 149.40	Stationery	
Total				**£ 149.40**
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	12/09/2025	£ 80.18	SLCC Membership	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	12/09/2025	£ 403.60	SLCC Conference	
Total				**£ 483.78**
Starboard Systems Limited t/a Scribe Accounts	11/07/2025	£ 489.60	Scribe	
Total				**£ 489.60**
Royal British Legion	17/11/2025	£ 50.00	Grant	
Total				**£ 50.00**
Royal Mail	11/07/2025	£ 445.80	PO Box	
Total				**£ 445.80**
Geoxsphere Ltd	14/11/2025	£ 194.40	Parish Online	
ONPA	06/11/2025	£ 25.00	ONPA - Membership Fees	
Total				**£ 219.40**
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	15/03/2026	£ 519.00	OALC Membership Fees	
Total				**£ 519.00**
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/10/2025	£ 12.36	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/11/2025	£ 12.10	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/12/2025	£ 12.10	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/01/2026	£ 12.10	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/02/2026	£ 12.10	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/03/2026	£ 12.10	MS365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	14/04/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/05/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/06/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/07/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	13/08/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd	15/09/2025	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	
Total				**£ 147.02**
Vale of White Horse District Council	02/04/2025	£ 204.56	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	13/07/2025	£ 193.79	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	06/11/2025	£ 118.43	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	23/01/2026	£ 36.11	Meeting Room Hire	
Vale of White Horse District Council	23/01/2026	£ 226.09	Meeting Room Hire	
Total				**£ 778.98**
Laura White	13/02/2026	£ 100.00	Logo	
Total				**£ 100.00**

Total				**£ 14.00**
Do The Numbers Ltd	15/04/2024	£ 380.00	Internal Audit Fees	
Total				**£ 380.00**
Zurich Municipal	18/07/2024	£ 319.82	Insurance	
Total				**£ 319.82**
Information Commissioners Office	29/10/2024	£ 35.00	ICO Registration	
Total				**£ 35.00**
Cloud Next Ltd	15/04/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/05/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/06/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	15/07/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/08/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/09/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	15/10/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	15/11/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/12/2024	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/01/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	14/02/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/03/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Total				**£ 143.76**
Boundary Park Sports Association	04/07/2024	£ 5,000.00	Grant	
Didcot RFU - Walking Rugby Team	15/07/2024	£ 600.00	Grant	
Homestart South Oxfordshire	15/07/2024	£ 2,000.00	Grant	
Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale	15/11/2024	£ 750.00	Grant	
Didcot Concert Orchestra	45719	1628	Grant	
Oxfordshire Play Association	03/03/2025	£ 500.00	Grant	
Didcot Cricket Club	04/03/2025	£ 1,406.00	Grant	
Total				**£ 11,884.00**
Moore	13/09/2024	£ 378.00	External Audit Fees	
Total				**£ 378.00**
Unity Trust	30/06/2024	£ 18.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	30/09/2024	£ 18.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/10/2024	£ 5.40	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	30/11/2024	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/12/2024	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/01/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	28/02/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/03/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Total				**£ 71.40**
			Total Box 6	**£ 18,657.11**

Allison Leigh	15/04/2025	£ 200.00	Internal Audit Fees	
Total				**£ 200.00**
Zurich Municipal	11/07/2025	£ 370.40	Insurance	
Total				**£ 370.40**
Information Commissioners Office	28/10/2025	£ 47.00	ICO Registration	
Total				**£ 47.00**
Cloud Next Ltd	14/04/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	15/05/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/06/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/07/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/08/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	15/09/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	14/10/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	14/11/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	14/12/2025	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	14/01/2026	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/02/2026	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Cloud Next Ltd	13/03/2026	£ 11.98	Hosting	
Total				**£ 143.76**
Homestart South Oxfordshire	17/11/2025	£ 2,000.00	Grant	
Oxfordshire Play Association	17/11/2025	£ 500.00	Grant	
Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale	23/01/2026	£ 800.00	Grant	
SOFEA	13/02/2026	£ 10,000.00	Grant	
Total				**£ 13,300.00**
Moore	12/09/2025	£ 378.00	External Audit Fees	
Total				**£ 378.00**
Cloud Next Ltd	15/07/2025	£ 60.00	Domain Renewal	
Cloud Next Ltd	12/09/2025	£ 60.00	Domain Renewal	
Total				**£ 120.00**
OpenAI OpCo, LLC	26/02/2026	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	
OpenAI OpCo, LLC	13/03/2026	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	
Total				**£ 14.00**
Unity Trust	30/04/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/05/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	30/06/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/08/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	30/09/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/07/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/10/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	30/11/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/12/2025	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/01/2026	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	28/02/2026	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	
Unity Trust	31/03/2026	£ 7.00	Bank Fees	
Total				**£ 73.00**
			Total Box 6	**£ 22,971.35**

Box 7 & 8 Variances Explanation

	Box 7	Box 8
FY 2024-2025 Total	£ 91,351	£ 91,351
FY 2025-2026 Total	£ 116,926	£ 116,926
Difference	£ 25,575	£ 25,575
Percentage Difference	28	28

The increase in our Box 7 and Box 8 totals for 2025-2026 is majoritively due to:
1) Increase in income £1,468.
2) Increase in total Earmarked Reserves (£26,280) despite Increased Expenditure (£5,855)

See Box 7 and Box 8 Reconciliation for further detail.

Box 7 & Box 8 Calculation Comparison

	2024-2025	**2025-2026**		
Starting Balance and Receipts				
Box 1	£ 61,387.39	£ 91,350.57		
Box 2	£ 50,188.00	£ 50,188.00		
Box 3	£ 1,954.19	£ 3,422.11	£ 1,467.92	Difference
Total IN	**£ 113,529.58**	**£ 144,960.68**	£ 31,431.10	Difference
In year Outgoings				
Box 4	£ 3,521.90	£ 5,062.92		
Box 5	£ -	£ -		
Box 6	£ 18,657.11	£ 22,971.35		
Total OUT	**£ 22,179.01**	**£ 28,034.27**	£ 5,855.26	Difference
Total IN, Less Total OUT (Box 7)	**£ 91,350.57**	**£ 116,926.41**	£ 25,575.84	Difference

As the accounts are operated on a Receipts and Payments basis Box 7 = Box 8

Western Valley Parish Council
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

		RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS
Opening Balance				
Balance at Bank		91,350.57		
Cash in Hand				
Precept	50,188.00			
Grants				
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)				
Allotment Fees				
Grass Cutting Contributions				
Interest	2,644.96			
VAT Refunds				
Audit Costs			515.00	
Bank Charges			73.00	
Chairman's Allowance				
Elections				
Expenses - WFH			312.00	
Expenses - Stationery			248.50	
Hall Hire			778.98	
Insurance			370.40	
IT Support and Software	0.43		562.14	
Office Equipment				
Staff Costs (All Staff, HMRC)			5,062.92	
Subscriptions (OALC, SLCC)			1,013.00	
Training			4,350.54	
Website			249.86	
Allotment Set-up				
Water - Allotments				
Grants (Including s137)			13,382.01	
In year projects, undefined				
NP Grants (Receipts)				
NP Staff Costs (Payments)				
NP General Expenses (Payments)			475.00	
VAT	776.72		640.92	
		53,610.11		**28,034.27**
Closing Balances:				
Balances in Bank Account				116,926.41
Cash in Hand				
TOTAL		**144,960.68**		**144,960.68**

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2026

Western Valley Parish Council
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS

Signed ____________________________
Responsible Financial Officer

Date ____________________________

Western Valley Parish Council
Reserves Balance
2025 - 2026

Reserve	OpeningBalance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	CurrentBalance
Earmarked					
Operating Reserve	13,000.00	-640.92			12,359.08
S106 Administration	407.00				407.00
Community Infrastructure Levy					0.00
New Allotments Project	21,239.01				21,239.01
Training	6,000.00	2,000.00			8,000.00
Parish Office - Project	25,000.00	14,316.40			39,316.40
Burial Ground - Project	25,000.00	640.92			25,640.92
Noticeboard					0.00
Bank Interest - For Granting					0.00
Neighbourhood Plan		9,550.00			9,550.00
Office Equipment Renewals		414.00			414.00
Total Earmarked	**90,646.01**	**26,280.40**			**116,926.41**
TOTAL RESERVE	**90,646.01**	**26,280.40**			**116,926.41**
GENERAL FUND					
TOTAL FUNDS					116,926.41

Western Valley Parish Council

PAYMENTS - S.137 Entries

Voucher	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
75	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Wreath	S	6.66	1.33	7.99
69	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Grant	X	2,000.00		2,000.00
76	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Wreath	X	3.99		3.99
70	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Grant	X	500.00		500.00
68	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Grant	X	50.00		50.00
101	Grants (Including s137)	13/02/2026		Unity Trust Current		Grant	X	10,000.00		10,000.00
77	Grants (Including s137)	17/11/2025		Unity Trust Current		Wreath	S	10.54	2.11	12.65
							Total	**12,571.19**	**3.44**	**12,574.63**

25.6. To receive the Internal Audit report, consider recommendations and agree actions.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Western Valley Parish Council

https://westernvalleyparish.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✔		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✔		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✔		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✔		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✔
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✔		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✔		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✔		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✔		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✔
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✔		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✔		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✔		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✔		
	Yes	**No**	**Not applicable**
P. **(For local councils only)** Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✔

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 29/04/2026

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Allison Leigh

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date: 29/04/2026

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

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

Western Valley Parish Council

Internal Audit 2025/2026
Internal Auditor: Allison Leigh

Internal Control Objective A: Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Bookkeeping arrangements	The Council uses Scribe. Payments are recorded properly.	There are no further recommendations on the day-to-day bookkeeping. The Council's bank balances exceed £100,000. I note the Council is looking to adopt an investment strategy and I would encourage them to do so.
Internal Control Objective B: This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Financial regulations	The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which are based on the NALC model from 2024. They are complied with.	An update was provided by NALC in 2025. I recommend the Council look to adopt the current model.
Internal Control Objective C: This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Review of effectiveness of Internal Controls	The Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit as well as its Statement of Internal controls at the April 2025 meeting.	No further recommendations.
Review of Risk Assessment	The Risk Assessment was reviewed at the May 2025 meeting.	No further recommendations.

Western Valley Parish Council

Internal Audit 2025/2026
Internal Auditor: Allison Leigh

Internal Control Objective D: The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Budgeting and precept	The precept was determined based on an approved budget agreed by the Council.	No further recommendations
Budget monitoring	The budget was monitored throughout the financial year	No further recommendations.
Reserves	The Council has adequate reserves.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective E: Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Income controls	Income is appropriately received and recorded.	No further recommendations.
VAT	VAT has been appropriately accounted for and a claim for 24/25 has been made at year end.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective F: Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Cash accounts	The Council does not have cash transactions.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective G: Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.		

Western Valley Parish Council

Internal Audit 2025/2026
Internal Auditor: Allison Leigh

Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Payroll controls	The hours and salary scale have been minuted and payroll properly carried out.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective H: Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Asset controls	The Asset Register has been adequately considered. Assets are inspected and issues reported as necessary.	No further recommendations.
Asset controls – Deeds and title established and shown on the asset register	N/A	
Investment registers	N/A	
Internal Control Objective I: Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Bank Reconciliations	Bank reconciliations are properly done monthly.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective J: Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Accounting statements	Quarterly budget reviews are carried out.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective K: If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/2025, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/2025 AGAR tick "not covered")		

Western Valley Parish Council

Internal Audit 2025/2026

Internal Auditor: Allison Leigh

Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Not covered	Not covered	Not covered
Internal Control Objective L: The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Information published on the website	The information is available on the website.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective M: In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Exercise of Public Rights	The exercise of public rights was properly carried out with a period commencing on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 and ending on Monday 14th July 2025.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective N: The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/2025 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
AGAR Publication requirements	The Council complied with the publication requirements for the 2024/2025 AGAR.	No further recommendations.
Internal Control Objective O: The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**

Email management	The Council has a .gov.uk domain and council emails for staff and councillors.	No further recommendations
Website accessibility	The Council has a website accessibility statement and looks at the process of compliance as one that is ongoing.	I encourage the Council to continue its monitoring of accessibility.
Adherence to data protection legislation	The Council has policies in place but does not have the ICO Model Publication Scheme as part of its publication scheme.	I am glad to see you have a publication scheme with a table explaining where the information is available. I would recommend introducing the document with the ICO's Model Publication Scheme.
Internal Control Objective P: (***For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.***		
Process	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Transparency compliance

Process	**Criteria**	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
Compliance with the Transparency Code	Expenditure over £100 is recorded on the Council website	This is on the website.	No further recommendations.
Compliance with the Transparency Code	The following material to be put on the website in addition to the Statement of Accounts from the 25/26 AGAR: a. Bank reconciliation	a. The bank reconciliation is on the website. b. The variances are on the website. c. N/A	No further recommendations.

	b. Explanation of Variances c. Any explanation of differences between boxes 7 and 8		
Compliance with the Transparency Code	Annual Governance Statement on the website	This is on the website.	No further recommendations.
Compliance with the Transparency Code	Annual Internal Audit Report on the website	This is on the website.	No further recommendations.
Compliance with the Transparency Code	List of councillor or member responsibilities on the website	This is on the website.	No further recommendations.
Compliance with the Transparency Code	Location of Public land and building assets on the website	No land/buildings are owned.	No further recommendations.
Compliance with the Transparency Code	Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings on the website	They are on the website.	No further recommendations.

Further comments and recommendations:

The Council and Clerk should be commended on addressing the findings of the Internal Audit for 2024/2025 and on the standard of operation of the Council for 2025/2026.

The following comments are those which I raise only to help further elevate the Council:

1. I note the date on the standing order is the Model Standing Orders form 2022. The Council should look to update to the current Model.

2. I commend the Council on its support of Clerk training, especially on her Community Governance degree. I would encourage Councillors to consider training courses as well.

3. I would encourage the Council to consider signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

4. I would encourage the Council to be mindful of the method of communication used. WhatsApp, especially on personal devices, is not an official channel of communication. Email and the website are the official channels of communication for the Council as is noted in the Council's Communication Policy.

5. I recommend the Council to consider including the powers to spend in the minutes.

6. I recommend the Council consider a councillor co-option policy.

7. I was unable to determine whether absences are noted when apologies aren't received. I advise that the absences are minuted whether apologies have been received or not in order to keep an audit trail for any councillors not meeting the 6-month rule per the Local Government Act 1972 s85.

8. It would be useful for the Council to adopt a biodiversity policy. I note that the Council does consider biodiversity in its planning responses.

25.7. To agree content and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 1 "Annual Governance Statement"

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

Western Valley Parish Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

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

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

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

14/05/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

26.01.25.7

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

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.WesternValleyParish.gov.uk

25.8. To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 2 "Accounting Statements"

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

Western Valley Parish Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	61,388	91,351	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value **must** agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	50,188	50,188	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,954	3,422	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	3,522	5,063	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	18,657	22,972	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	91,351	116,926	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. **must** equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	91,351	116,926	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,211	3,211	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	**Yes**	**No**	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

LWhite

Date 07/04/2026

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

14/05/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

26.01.25.8

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Appendix M

25.9. To approve the dates for the public rights of inspection: 3rd June – 14th July 2026, being 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July.

WESTERN VALLEY
Parish Council

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

NOTICE

1. Date of announcement Friday 15th May 2026

2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.
Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2025, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

Clerk to the Council
Western Valley Parish Council

Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk
07424 402 938

Western Valley PC
PO Box 4311
READING
RG8 1DD

commencing on **Wednesday 3rd June 2026** and ending on **Tuesday 14th July 2026.**

3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.

4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:

Moore (Ref AP/HD)
Rutland House
Minerva Business Park
Lynch Wood
Peterborough
PE2 6PZ

MOORE

5. This announcement is made by Mrs L White, Clerk to the Council and RFO

L White

Appendix N

Title	Finance 2025-2026
Author	Responsible Financial Officer
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14th May 2026

26.1. To approve finalised payments list for April and payments for May 2026

Further to the internal auditor's request that powers to spend be included in the minutes, our list of payments through the year are fairly standard, and therefore to comply with the majority of this request for the standard payments, the following authorities to spend are applicable.

Spend	Power
Staff Related	
Expenses	LG(FP)A 1963 s 5
Pension contributions	LGPSR 2013 (SI 2013/2356)
Salaries (and PAYE to HMRC))	LGA 1972 s 112(2)
Training	LGA 1972 s.111
Travel	LG(FP)A 1963 s.5
General Office of the Clerk	
Hire of hall or room (Vale of White Horse)	LGA 1972 s.134(4)
Insurance - Accidents	LGA 1972 s.140
Insurance - property / libaility / fidelity	LGA 1972 s.111
Audit fees	LGA 1972 s.111
Computer; purchase & maintenance of, purchase of software (OpenAI; Scribe; MS365)	LGA 1972 s.111
Stationery	LGA 1972 s.111
Website; creation & running costs (CloudNext, EyelidProductions)	LGA 1972 s.142
Postage	LG(FP)A 1963 s.5
Opening Bank Account / Bank Fees	LGA 1972 s.111 & s.150
Other Activities of this Council	
Annual Parish Meeting	LGA 1972 s 150(2)
Anything for the benefit of the inhabitants including grants, without another specific power.	LGA 1972 s.137
Grant to Citizens Advice Bureau	LGA 1972 s.142(2A)
Parish Council Newsletter	LGA 1972 s.142 (1A)
Parish Plan / Neighbourhood Plan	LGA 1972 s.111

Anything outside this list during the year, will be noted separately at the time of the payment.

Appendix N

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
3	13/04/2026	£ 5.83	£ 1.17	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	OpenAI OpCo, LLC
4	13/04/2026	£ 10.08	£ 2.02	£ 12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
5	13/04/2026	£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
6	13/04/2026	£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
7	17/04/2026	£ 201.87	£ -	£ 201.87	Meeting Room Hire	Vale of White Horse District Council
10	30/04/2026	£ 7.00	£ -	£ 7.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		£ 600.61	£ -	£ 600.61	Total Staff Costs	
		£ 861.38	**£ 5.18**	**£ 866.56**	**Total April**	
Voucher No	**Date**	**Net**	**VAT**	**Total**	**Description**	**Supplier**
11	12/05/2026	£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
12	12/05/2026	£ 10.08	£ 2.02	£ 12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
13	12/05/2026	£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
14	12/05/2026	£ 5.83	£ 1.17	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	OpenAI OpCo, LLC
15	15/05/2026	£ 315.00	£ -	£ 315.00	Internal Audit Fees	Allison Leigh
18	31/05/2026	£ -	£ 7.00	£ 7.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		£ 822.66	£ -	£ 822.66	Total Staff Costs	
		£ 1,189.56	**£ 12.18**	**£ 1,201.74**	**Total May**	

26.2. To approve list of payments to be paid by standing order for FY 2026-2027.

All are paid to the Clerk, as ChatGPT, MS365 and Hosting are all paid on the Clerk's personal debit card. This is a temporary measure until such time as Unity Trust offer free to use Debit Card, which is due to available int eh coming months.

Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
£ 5.83	£ 1.17	£ 7.00	ChatGPT	OpenAI OpCo, LLC
£ 10.08	£ 2.02	£ 12.10	MS365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White

26.3. To note receipts for April 2026

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Customer
1	08/04/2026	£ 28,300.00	£ -	£ 28,300.00	Precept	Vale of White Horse District Council
2	10/04/2026	£ -	£ 640.92	£ 640.92	VAT Refund	HMRC
		£ 28,300.00	**£ 640.92**	**£ 28,940.92**	**Total April**	

Appendix N

26.4. To note the reconciled bank balances, up to 30th April 2026.

April 2026

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/04/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026			116,926.41
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026			28,940.92
				145,867.33
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/04/2026			866.56
A	**Cash in Hand 30/04/2026** (per Cash Book)			**145,000.77**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/04/2026	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current	30/04/2026	29,074.36	
	Unity Trust Reserve	30/04/2026	115,926.41	
				145,000.77
	Less unpresented payments			
				145,000.77
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**145,000.77**
	A = B Checks out OK			

Image shows:

A Cash in Hand = £145,000.77

B Adjusted Bank Balances = £145,000.77

A equals B, and Checks out OK.

Unity Trust Current Account Balance £29,074.36

Unity Trust Reserve Account Balance £115,926.41

26.5. To approve salaries and hours for the year ahead – deferred to July, after Staffing Committee have completed the appraisal process.

Appendix O

Title	**27 To consider upcoming training courses and approve attendance & budget**
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 14th May 2026

Code of Conduct Training – 16th Jun 18:30 £35 - ONLINE

This Code of Conduct training will help town and parish councillors understand their legal responsibilities, promote high standards of behaviour, and build public trust. The training covers:

- the Oxfordshire Code of Conduct
- the Nolan principles
- respectful conduct
- declarations of interest
- handing complaints

Talking Tables – 25th June 10:00 – 15:30 £40 – Benson (OALC HQ)

This year's theme will be From *Building Thriving Communities: The Evolving Role of Town & Parish Councils* - tables will include:

- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
- Digitisation of the AGAR and the Updated Proper Practices - NALC and SAAA
- Supporting Play and Recreation Areas - Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association
- Healthy Neighbourhoods - NHS
- Working Smarter with Local Groups - OCVA
- Engagement with Local Government Reorganisation and Local Plans - O'Neill Homer
- Interactive table for dealing with Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests, including real examples - Breakthrough Communications
- HR for town and parish councils, including appraisals and working from home - Worknest
- Broadcasting and hybrid meetings - Cloudy IT
- Risk and risk assessments - Gallagher
- Policies, procedures, CiLCA and LCAS - SLCC & OALC

A networking lunch break will provide an opportunity to speak with our exhibitors and sponsors as well as meet fellow councillors and clerks. Please indicate when booking if you have any dietary requirements.

Banking for Parish Councils – 04th September. 10:00 – 11:00 FREE - ONLINE

Unity Trust Bank has long supported the parish and town council sector, offering ethical and practical banking solutions that meet the unique needs of local government. During this session, we will talk about our services, and share broader guidance on good banking practices for councils (there is no hard sell). This is suitable for both existing and new/potential customers.

We'll cover key governance and operational considerations including:

- Understanding the role and responsibilities of signatories and authorisers
- Navigating electronic banking and dual authorisation
- Managing reserves and council cash flow
- Best practice in financial governance and internal controls

- Top tips for changing your mandate: account change management
- Switch banking: How easy is it and first steps
- Help with strengthening your financial procedures

There will be a presentation of around 30 minutes, followed by an Q&A session for the remainder of the hour.

Roles and Responsibilities – 03rd December 10:00 – 16:00 £125 – Benson (OALC HQ)

Parish and town councils play a vital role in representing the interests of the communities they serve and improving the quality of life for local people.

This one-day course, aimed at newly elected councillors and also suitable for new clerks, will outline the roles and responsibilities of clerks and councillors so that they can work together effectively. It will also provide an introduction to law and procedure for local councils and a networking lunch break.

Session One (morning)

- The council - what is it?
- Powers and duties
- getting and spending money
- Code of conduct
- Who does what? - Councillors, the Chair, the Council, the Clerk - it's a team

Session Two (afternoon)

- Meetings, Committees, Virtual meetings
- Agenda, Minutes
- Governance
- Your community and engaging with it
- Social media
- FoI, GDPR etc
- Planning
- Training, keeping up to date

Councillor Fundamentals – 03 Feb 2027 18:30 – 21:00 £70 – ONLINE

Workshop Aim: This online workshop explores the fundamental knowledge needed to be an effective Councillor in a Town or Parish Council.

Workshop Content:

- In this session we will set the scene of Local Government and explore:-
- The roles and responsibilities of the 5 components of the Council:
  - Council, Councillor, Chairman, Clerk and RFO
- The importance of the law in meetings and the need for an effective agenda and accurate minutes
- Council delegation through Committees - ways of managing your responsibilities. The place of Annual meetings
- Making a Council plan for delivery to and for your Community and signing ‘The Pledge’.
- Compliance through Governance arrangements with full transparency