**PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING**

**Venue: Parish Meeting Room**

**16th January 2023**

**Minutes**

Present:

Chairman Alan Youel

Cllr Kristian Burgess

Cllr Mark Allen

Cllr Ruth Hoose

Cllr Richard Solesbury-Timms

Cllr Kay Stevens

Cllr Nina Truman

Cllr Rachel Washer

Parish Clerk / RFO

**23/01 Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Cllr Jerrams Coughtrey and Cllr Knight.  
On the proposal of Cllr Hoose, it was **RESOLVED:** to approve apologies for absence.

**23/02 OPEN MEETING**

A resident made representations on 22/05 and title of bounds, 23/09 a request for who was involved in ICC, 23/12 request for more information on Vexatious Requests policy considerations, 23/16 commentary on key safe situation.

A resident made representations on 23/15 Gritting provisions and 23/14 King’s Coronation. The resident was permitted to speak further on 23/15 due to industry and local knowledge of the topic being discussed.

**Open meeting closed 19:23**

**23/03 Members’ declaration of interest in items on the agenda**

None declared.

**23/04 Approval of minutes of meeting 19/12/2022**On the proposition of Cllr Burgess, it was **RESOLVED**:To approve the minutes of the meeting of Council on Monday 19th December 2022.

DRAFT

**23/05 Planning – letters, decisions and applications**No comments or objections.

**23/06**  **VAS**Data to be retrieved and VAS relocated by February full council meeting. A location rota to be prepared by Cllr Allen and Cllr Burgess for February full council meeting, to be shared with the Parish pending Council approval.

**23/07 Open Spaces – Thenford road, Millers Way**The existing task and finish group to contact WNC for more detail that provided by planning portal. Compare proposal with other village developments, obtain the management plans and costs for play areas and open spaces of newer developments

**23/08** **Authorisation of payments**

On the proposition of Cllr Allen it was **RESOLVED:** To approve and provide dual signatory on

payments scheduled December 2022-January 2023.

**23/09 ICC**

Item deferred until ICC monitor had been completed, Cllr Solebury-Timms and Cllr Jerrams Coughtrey to coordinate.

**23/10 Scheme of delegation**

On the proposition of Cllr Youel it was **RESOLVED:** To approve the Scheme of Delegation pending change to 7.1 Convening a meeting, “While” in place of “When” ~ a councillor.

**23/11** **Civility and Respect Pledge**

A task and finish group (Cllrs Solebury Timms, Allen, Youel and Washer) to explore a training programme and Dignity at Work policy in line with the pledge commitments.

**23/12** **Vexatious requests and complaints policy.**

Task and finish group 23/11 to present a policy as part of the scope of the pledge.

**23/13** **Sealed Knot 360 anniversary event** – attached

Cllrs Stevens, Solesbury Timms and Burgess to create a business plan to incorporate all the necessary events planning considerations for presentation at next full council meeting.

**23/14** **King’s Coronation village events** – attached

Updates received from the assigned Task and Finish group regarding organisational plans and residents’ opinion.

Parish Council to facilitate events by publishing a schedule of the Bank holiday weekend and allowing local groups to use the meeting room FOC for Coronation purposes. Agenda item for next meeting to decide on commemorative items for children.

**23/15 Purchase and use of a manual gritter**

The council Considered possibility that the equipment would not be sufficient. Decision deferred until next meeting when quote for footpath gritting had been obtained.

**23/16** **PMR Key safe**

On the proposition of Cllr Truman it was **RESOLVED:** To approve the purchase and installation of a key safe for clubs/organisations’ shared access for PMR rental.

**23/17** **Village maintenance works**

On the proposition of Cllr Solesbury Timms it was **RESOLVED:** To approve A Price to undertake maintenance works for the PMR windows.

Stagecoach to be contacted regarding bus shelter repair. Dog waste bin contractor to be asked to quote for dog waste and grit bin repairs.

Play area works to be deferred until next meeting pending play area weekly inspection report.

**23/18**  **Allotments**

Quotes to be shared with landowner. Broad terms of contract to be requested. Land user to be contacted to advise of Landowner’s and Council’s current considerations of the area.

**23/19**  **Matters for information**

Next issue of Cheney Chatter will be March.

**23/20** **Exclusion of press and public**

On the proposition of Cllr Youel it was **RESOLVED:** in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**Meeting discussion delayed due to resident’s interruption.**

**23/21 Staffing matters** Considerations under the remit of HR Committee.

**23/22 Open spaces tender**

On the proposition of Cllr Burgess it was **RESOLVED:** To approve the contract pending amendment to frequency of maintenance to an area.

**23/23** **Next meeting** 20th February 2022 – Full Council Meeting. **Signed:**

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| **Application Number**  **23/29** | | | **Comments due** | | | **Location** | | | **Proposal** | | | | **Parish Council Comments** | |
| None | | | None | | | None | | | None | | | | None | |
| **Authorisation of Payments February 2023 Month 11 - Tax Year**  **23/33** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | ***.*** | *Pip Davis* | |  |  | |  | *4084* | *Street warden Winter kits* | |  | |
| *14/12/2022* | *INV-GB-100008281-2022-40172* | | ***.*** | *Amazon (discount)* | | *3.98* | *0.80* | | *4.54* |  | *Ice-scraper* | |  | |
|  | *DOC-2092900635-2022-7724* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | |  |  | | *2.67* |  | *Cable ties* | |  | |
|  | *DS-ASE-INV-GB-2022-475473182* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *6.64* | *1.32* | | *7.96* |  | *Garden scissors* | |  | |
|  | *DOC-2227188135-2022-557* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *5.91* |  | | *5.91* |  | *Wire brush* | |  | |
|  | *DSE-ASE-INV-GB-2022-475225257* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *35.82* | *7.16* | | *42.98* |  | *Winter gloves* | |  | |
|  | *GB288D11WAEUI* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *2.02* | *0.41* | | *2.43* |  | *Gorilla tape* | |  | |
|  | *GB288J674AEUI* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *11.88* | *2.38* | | *14.26* |  | *Screwdriver* | |  | |
|  | *INV-GB-14236262861-2022-85412* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *5.65* |  | | *5.65* |  | *Vinyl gloves* | |  | |
|  | *GB2895QLCAEUI* | | ***.*** | *Amazon* | | *5.40* | *1.09* | | *6.49* |  | *Lubricant spray, Face masks* | |  | |
|  | *Receipt* | |  | *Screwfix* | |  |  | | *32.99* |  | *Key lock box* | |  | |
|  | *Receipt* | |  | *Post Office Ltd* | |  |  | | *15.20* |  | *Postage* | |  | |
|  |  | |  | Pip Davis | |  |  | | 141.08 |  | TOTAL EXPENSES | |  | |
| 02/02/2023 | 202004 | | . | AGU Treecraft | | 1,910.00 | 382.00 | | 2,292.00 |  | Cemetery maintenance | |  | |
| 08/02/2023 | 8050816 | | DD | Hiscox Underwriting Ltd | | 391.75 | 0.00 | | 391.75 | *4040* | Insurance | |  | |
| 11/04/2022 | INV-1855 | | . | NCALC | | 132.00 | 0.00 | | 132.00 |  | Off to a flying start x 3 | |  | |
| 20/06/2022 | INV-2008 | | . | NCALC | | 1,511.17 | 72.00 | | 1,583.17 |  | NCALC subscription | |  | |
| 06/07/2022 | INV-2149 | | . | NCALC | | 30.00 | 6.00 | | 36.00 |  | Training course | |  | |
| 05/01/2023 | HMRC Qtr 3 | | | NIER | | 1149.87 | 0.00 | | 1835.27 |  | HMRC Qtr 3 | |  | |
| NIEE | | 685.4 | 0.00 | |  |  | |
| 10/02/2023 | GBP01044050141960875 | | DD | Nest | | 136.39 | 0.00 | | 136.39 | *4022* | Pensions | |  | |
| 07/07/2023 | 18619941 | | . | O2 | | 108.28 | 21.86 | | 131.14 | *4553* | Mobiles | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Onecom | | 66.75 | 13.35 | | 80.10 |  | Broadband | |  | |
| 17/01/2023 | 65/I06405 | | . | Red Office | | 375.01 | 75.00 | | 450.01 |  | Printer | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Rydal Security | | 67.72 | 13.54 | | 81.26 | *4553* | CCTV- mobile phones | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Rydal Security | | 8.00 | 1.60 | | 9.60 | *4552* | Remote support | |  | |
| 31/01/2023 | 457915 | | . | SGW Payroll | | 31.50 | 6.30 | | 37.80 |  | Payroll | |  | |
| 27/01/2023 | 6270 | | . | Shield Maintenance Ltd | | 147.33 | 29.47 | | 176.80 | *4511* | Dog waste bin collection | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Siemens | | 103.00 | 20.60 | | 123.60 | *4550* | CCTV lease | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Siemens | | 225.00 | 45.00 | | 270.00 |  | Printer lease | |  | |
|  |  | | DD | Tower Leasing | | 157.00 | 31.40 | | 188.40 | *4550* | CCTV system, tilt zoom camera, pole | | | |
| 25/01/2023 | 954594 | | . | UK Safety Management Ltd | | 148.99 | 29.80 | | 178.79 |  | PAT and socket testing | |  | |
| 28/02/2022 | . | | . | Richard Jerrams Coughtrey | | . | 0.00 | | 0.00 | *4000* | Monthly salary | |  | |
| 28/02/2022 | . | | . | Debbie Burdett | | . | 0.00 | | 0.00 | *4000* | Monthly salary | |  | |
| 28/02/2022 | . | | . | Pip Davis | | . | 0.00 | | 0.00 | *4000* | Monthly salary | |  | |
| 28/02/2022 | . | | . | Pip Davis | | 6.5 hours | 0.00 | | 0.00 | *4000* | Overtime | |  | |
|  |  | |  | . | |  |  | |  |  |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  | Total | | 8,275.16 | & Salaries |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | **Bank Balances as at 03/03/2023** | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | Community Account |  |  | | 100.00 | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | Business Premium Account 360 | |  | | 311,247.31 | |
|  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | Business Premium Account 259 | |  | | 77,186.08 | |

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EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT 2023-24

**MIDDLETON CHENEY  
Parish Council**

**23/35**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **INTERNAL CONTROL** | **SUGGESTED TESTING** | **PARISH COUNCIL CONTROLS** |
| **Proper bookkeeping** | Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?  Is the cashbook arithmetic correct?  Is the cashbook regularly balanced? | The Council uses a software program called RBS Alpha which is specifically designed for Local Councils.  Control over these aspects is part of the program. |
| **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations adopted and applied** | Has the council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations? | Yes |
| **Payments controls** | Has a Responsible Financial Officer been appointed with specific duties? | Yes |
| Have items or services above the de minimis amount been competitively purchased? | Yes. Suspension of Financial Regulations exceptions for appropriate reasons. |
| Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted? | A schedule of expenditure (Authorisation of Payments) is presented to each Finance and Policy meeting. Invoices are available at the meeting for inspection and signature by two Councillors. |
| Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed? | Partial. VAT reclaimed March 2022 – November 2022. Pending further investigation and confirmation of VAT status for 2021-2022 year. |
| Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits? | Expenditure for this financial year allocated to S137 nominal code in error. No s137 expenditure occurred. |

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| **INTERNAL CONTROL** | | | **SUGGESTED TESTING** | **PARISH COUNCIL CONTROLS** | |
| **Risk Management arrangements** | | | Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity? | To be reviewed by Internal Auditor annually. AGAR pending sign off for 2020-21, 2021-2022. | |
| Do minutes record the Council carrying out an annual risk assessment? | Completed Risk Assessment adopted 16th May 2022 22/1058.  Further distinction needed for date Risk Assessment was carried out. | |
| Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate? | Yes, the insurance policy for Middleton Cheney Parish Council falls due for renewal on 17th April 2023 and is currently insured with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited. Review of cover to be considered ahead of time of renewal to ensure it is adequate. | |
| Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed? | The Council carries out internal monitoring on a regular basis by a nominated Councillor. This is undertaken periodically throughout the year, a summary is reported back to the Full Council. | |
| **Budgetary Controls** | | | Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept? | Yes | |
| Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget? | Areas of significant decrease in expenditure (e.g. Street lighting) identified by Chair’s Precept covering note 2023-24  Quarterly budgetary reports should be presented to Finance & Policy committee, not been presented 2022-23. | |
| **Income Controls** | | | Is income properly recorded and promptly banked? | Some delay, particularly in period of absence of RFO/Clerk. | |
| Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority’s notification? | Yes | |
| Are security controls over cash adequate and effective? | No formal framework identified, to be reviewed as part of Internal Audit. | |
| **INTERNAL CONTROL**  **23/35** | **SUGGESTED TESTING** | | | **PARISH COUNCIL CONTROLS** | |
| **Payroll Controls** | Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions? | | | Yes | |
| Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council? | | | Yes - To be reviewed by Internal Auditor at final accounts.  NOTE: Council use independent Payroll provider to handle all employment liabilities – these and salary payments are made in accordance with the Payroll providers instructions. | |
| Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council? | | | Yes – all other payments (expenses) are presented to council for approval. | |
| Have PAYE/NI been properly operated by the council as an employer? | | | PAYE/NI recorded and operated on behalf of the council by Payroll provider, however delays have occurred in payments to HMRC. | |
| **Assets controls** | Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care? | | | Yes | |
| Are the assets and Investments registers up to date? | | | No. To be reviewed by Internal Auditor at final accounts. | |
| Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register? | | | Unknown – further scrutiny needed on completion of assets register and renewal of insurance. | |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion? | | | Partial – Bank Reconciliation is now carried out monthly and is reviewed by Internal Auditor at final accounts. Previous backlog of bank reconciliation during absence of Clerk/RFO. | |
| Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? | | | No – Alpha system requires a match between bank balances and transactions made. | |
| Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation? | | | Yes | |
| **Year-end procedures** | Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)? | | | Yes | |
| Do accounts agree with the cashbook? | | | Review undertaken by the Internal Auditor as part of the review of the accounts for the year. | |

**MIDDLETON CHENEY  
Parish Council**

**23/36**

**Financial Risk Assessment & Management 2023-24**

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| **FINANCE** | | | | | |
| **Ref** | **Topic** | **Risk** | **H/M/L** | **Management/Control of Risk** | **Review/Assess/Revise** |
| 1 | Precept | Adequacy of precept | L | To determine the precept amount required, the Parish Council should receive quarterly budget information and meet ahead of the precept demand to assess adequacy to date. | Review Quarterly budget info to be provided. |
| 2 | Requirements not submitted to WNC | L | WNC requests precept requirement providing a prompt for the Clerk. The precept request form is submitted by the Clerk in writing to the WNC.  Clerk keeps record of precept request. | Satisfactory Clerk to minute the precept amount. |
| 3 | Precept not received | L | Precept receipt is monitored by Clerk who informs Council when the precept is received at the next full council meeting. | Satisfactory |
| 4 | Budgeting | Budget not prepared for next financial year | L | The Parish Council can use data on previous budget and year to date expenditure to anticipate requirements by nominal code/category. Budget and precept setting are timetabled for meeting agenda annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar. | Satisfactory |
| 5 | Financial Records | Inadequate records | M | The Parish Council’s Financial Regulations outline the required format of finance processing and record-keeping. ICC, Internal audit and AGAR to trigger proper scrutiny of the effectiveness of Financial Regulations in practice. | Review  Adequacy of record keeping against Financial Regulations during absence of clerk / under new clerk to be reviewed. |
| 6 | Financial irregularities/Internal controls | M | ICC ensure basic financial management compliance such as bank reconciliations and VAT reclaim. Record keeping of invoices, statements, cheque books and paying in books maintained as a resource for scrutinising errors. | Review  Finance and Policy Committee to review finance reports quarterly. |
| 7 | Bank and Banking | Inadequate checks Bank mistakes  Loss  Charges | L  L  L  L | The Parish Council’s Financial Regulations is the essential framework for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts.  Banking errors can be discovered by the Clerk/RFO during monthly bank reconciliations and appropriate resolution sought with the bank.  Reconciliation reports to run each month to support cashbook balancing. Dual signatory required for authorisation of payments and losses to be brought to the attention of Finance and Policy Committee. | Satisfactory. Financial Regulations to be reviewed in line with Standing Order Calendar. |
| 8 | Cash | Loss through theft or dishonesty | M | The Parish Council receives very few payments in cash though the handling and management of this is set out in section 9 of the Financial Regulations. The Parish Council does not have a receipt book. | Review handling of cash to ensure both payee and Parish Council have record of cash payments. |
| 9 | Reporting and Auditing | Information communication | L | 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. | Review  Controls required to ensure prompts in place to receive information. |
| 10 | All Costs & expenses Debts | Goods not supplied but billed | L | All goods are authorised on the Schedule of Payments.  Goods received at Parish Meeting Rooms and not other addresses where the Clerk/RFO or employees can verify receipt of goods. Clerk/RFO to query bills for goods/services not received. | Satisfactory |
| 11 | Incorrect invoicing | L | All invoices are checked by the Clerk/RFO.  Clerk/RFO to handle all invoices in accordance with 6.2 of Financial Regulations. | Satisfactory |
| 12 | BACS/Cheque payable incorrect | L | Clerk/RFO confirms all payments against payment request information, e.g. invoices and payroll. For cheques, dual signatory is required and copy of authorisation of payments detailing amounts provided. For BACS, a councillor authorises payments created by the Clerk/RFO. | Satisfactory |
| 13 | Loss of stock | L | The Parish Council may hold consolidated stock | Review  Current Financial Regulations do not account for the management or loss of stock. |
| 14 | Unpaid invoices | L | Unpaid invoices for Council goods or services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance.  Terms and methods for payments included on Council invoices. | Satisfactory. |
| 15 | Grants and support - payable | Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay | L | All payments made follow process of authorisation of payment and dual signatory / approval of online payment. Grant Funding Policy to be followed. | Satisfactory  Grant Funding Protocols under review. |
| 16 | Grants - receivable | Receipts of Grant | L | The Finance and Policy Committee to oversee any terms and conditions of grants received by the Parish Council are satisfied. Currently no regular grants received. | Review Review of Financial Regulations to consider management of grants received. |
| 17 | Charges – rentals receivable | Receipt of rental | L | Allotment and Parish Meeting Room hire should be invoiced and payment pursued as per the invoice payment terms.  Rent rates agreed annually by Parish Council. | Satisfactory |
| 18 | Insurance implication | M | The Parish Council insures fixtures and fittings at the Parish Meeting Room.  New allotment agreements to be implemented to outline tenant liability for allotment damages. | Review Clerk/RFO to issue new agreements to allotment tenants. |
| 19 | Accountability | Work awarded incorrectly | M | The Parish Council to refer to its Financial Regulations and adhere to the requirements for the award of contracts.  Advice to be sought from Contract Finder / Crown Commercial Services or other appropriate external source if needed, | Review  Finance and Policy to assess contracts tendering and awards process while “live”. |
| 20 | Overspend on services/depletion of reserves | M | RFO to provide recommendations / report on budget availability in line with Financial Regulations Section 3. | Satisfactory |
| 21 | Salaries and associated costs | Salary paid incorrectly  Wrong rate paid Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue | L  L  L  L | Salary agreed and banking standing order authorised where appropriate for employees. Payroll completed by 3rd party and provides Yellow Book Returns / P32 report for verification of NIC and Tax calculations. Clerk/RFO confirms quarterly HMRC payments with payroll provider. | Satisfactory |
| 22 | Workplace pension | Lack of adequate provision | L | Payroll provider undertakes auto-enrolment process on Parish Council instruction. NEST pension provided for employees. | Review  Consider NEST against LGPS long term and implications of trying to change pension providers. |
| 23 | Employees | Loss of key personnel/difficulty in retaining Staff  Not enough hours for role | M | Vacancy would be advertised widely. Cover would be organised by other employees. Hours reviewed on at least an annual basis. Review of staff responsibility in cases of high staff turnover. | Review  Annual appraisals with ad hoc meetings to provide direct response to issues and retain staff. |
| 24 | Fraud by staff | L | Limited cash handled and adequate procedures in place. 2 councillors sign cheques/authorise invoices. Bank balances reported quarterly, statements available for inspection, checked and signed by two councillors. Expenses evidences by invoice/receipt. | Satisfactory |
| 25 | Councillor allowances | Councillors over-paid | L | No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors. | No procedure required |
| 26 | Election costs | Risk of an election cost | L | Known elections budgeted for through reserves. By-Elections to be provided from contingency budget | Officers and Councillors to monitor budget and reserves throughout the year to ensure adequate funding available if required. |
| 27 | VAT | Re-claiming/charging | L | The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end. |  |
| 28 | Annual Return | Submit within time limits | L | Annual Return is completed and signed by the Parish Council, submitted to an internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent on to the External Auditor, any issues with providing the return within the deadline to be managed directly with the SAAA-appointed external auditor. | Review  Finance and Policy Committee to consider a calendar to ensure timely completion. |
| 29 | Legal Powers | Illegal activity or payments | L | All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Council Meetings. | Satisfactory |
| 30 | Minutes / Agendas / Notices / Statutory Documents | Accuracy and legality | L | Minutes and agenda are produced in accordance with Standing Orders by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed and retained according to the legal requirements | Satisfactory |
| 31 | Business conduct | L | Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chairperson. Training available for new councillors with NCALC to outline expectations regarding conduct of business. | Satisfactory  Members to adhere to Code of Conduct. |
| 32 | Members interests | Conflict of interest | L | The declaring of interests by members at a meeting reminds Councillors of their duty and should remain on the agenda. | Satisfactory |
| 33 | Register of Members interests | M | Members have a duty to update their individual Register of Interests, criminal penalties enforceable to deter non-completion. | Review Clerk to arrange for forms to be re-signed annually |
| 34 | Insurance | Adequacy | L | An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal in April) of all insurance arrangements in place. Risk assessments completed as required.  Managed in accordance with Section 14 of Financial Regulations. | Review  Finance and Policy to consider the questionnaire ahead of April renewal. |
| 35 | Cost | L | Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. Financial Regulations Section 14. | Review  Parish Council may consider obtaining comparative quotes at time of renewal. |
| 36 | Data protection | Loss or theft of personal data  GDPR  Freedom of Information | M | The Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioner, registration reference Z6162100, expiring 6th March 2023.  Policies for data protection, document retention, freedom of information and a privacy notice have been adopted and published. | Renew registration with Information commissioner 2023 |

A picture containing text, linedrawing

Description automatically generatedTo consider the adoption of a Vexatious Requests and Complaints policy.

**23/38**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category**: Policy | **Status**: Draft |
| **Responsible**: Clerk/RFO | **Adoption minute ref**: |
| **Applicable to**: HR Committee | **Adoption date**: |
| **Version**: 1.0 | **Next review**: |

**Vexatious Requests and Complaints Policy**

A policy for dealing with abusive, persistent, or vexatious requests, and requesters. This policy can also be used for dealing with abusive, persistent, or vexatious complaints and complainants by substituting “request” and “requester” with the words “complaint” and “complainant” where appropriate.

1. **Introduction**
   1. This policy identifies situations where a person making a request, either individually or as part of a group, or a group of requesters, might be considered to be habitual or vexatious. The following forms the Parish Council’s policy for ways of responding to these situations.
   2. In this policy the term habitual means ‘done repeatedly or as a habit’. The term vexatious is recognised in law and means ‘denoting an action or the bringer of an action that is brought purely to cause annoyance to the defendant’.
   3. Indicators that requests (which can be verbal, written, in person, via telephone or information technology) are vexatious are if:
      1. they include abusive or aggressive language.
      2. requesters can be said to bear a personal grudge or make completely unsubstantiated accusations against the Parish Council, individual Councillors, or specific employees.
      3. requests from individuals are unreasonably persistent, frequent, or overlapping.
      4. the effort required to meet the request will be so grossly oppressive or a strain on time and resources, that the Parish Council cannot reasonably be expected to comply, no matter how legitimate the matter or valid intentions of the requester.
   4. This policy intends to assist in identifying and managing persons who seek to be disruptive to the Council through pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct.
   5. The term “request” in this policy includes requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, and any subsequent modification of this legislation.
   6. Habitual or vexatious requests can be a problem for Council staff and Members. The difficulty in handling such requests is that they are time consuming and wasteful of resources in terms of Officer and Councillor time. While the Parish Council endeavours to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all requesters there are times when there is nothing further which can reasonably be done to assist or to rectify a real or perceived problem.
   7. When dealing with any request the Parish Council will consider:
      1. the burden complying with requests would bring on it.
      2. the motive of the requester.
      3. the value or serious purpose of the request.
      4. if dealing with the request would cause any harassment of or distress to employees.
   8. Raising of legitimate queries, or the criticism of the progress of a request, for example if agreed timescales are not met, should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as a vexatious or an unreasonably persistent requestor. Similarly, the fact that a requestor is unhappy with the outcome of a request and seeks to challenge it should not necessarily cause him or her to be labelled vexatious or unreasonably persistent.
   9. The aim of this policy is to contribute to the overall aim of dealing with all requests in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair, and reasonable.
2. **Habitual or Vexatious Requesters**
   1. For the purpose of this policy the following definition of habitual or vexatious requesters will be used: “The repeated and/or obsessive pursuit of unreasonable requests and/or unrealistic outcomes and/or reasonable requests in an unreasonable manner”.
   2. Prior to considering its implementation the Parish Clerk will send a copy of this policy to the requester to give them prior notification of its possible implementation.
   3. Where requests continue and have been identified as habitual or vexatious in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 3, the Parish Clerk will seek agreement from Councillors to treat the requester as a habitual or vexatious requester for the appropriate course of action to be taken. Section 4 details the options available for dealing with habitual or vexatious requests.
   4. The Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council will notify requesters, in writing, of the reasons why their request has been treated as habitual or vexatious and the action that will be taken.
   5. The status of the requester will be kept under review. If a requester subsequently demonstrates a more reasonable approach, then their status will be reviewed. See 6.1.
3. **Definitions**
   1. Middleton Cheney Parish Council defines unreasonably persistent and vexatious requesters as those people who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Council, hinder the Council’s consideration of them or other people’s requests. The description ‘unreasonably persistent’ and ‘vexatious’ may apply separately or jointly to a requester.
   2. Examples include the way in which, or frequency with which requesters raise their issues and how requesters respond when informed of the Parish Council’s decision about the request.
4. **Imposing Restrictions**
   1. The Parish Clerk will ensure that the request is being or has been addressed in accordance with policy and relevant regulations.
   2. In the first instance the Parish Clerk will consult with the Council prior to issuing a warning to the requester. The Clerk will contact the requester in writing (sent by signed for delivery), provide them with a copy of the Vexatious Requests & Complaints Policy, explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour
   3. If the disruptive behaviour continues, the Clerk will issue a further letter, sent by signed for delivery to the requester advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact the Parish Council in future will be restricted. The Clerk will make this decision in consultation with the Council and inform the requester in writing of the procedures that have been applied and for what period. The letter will state:
      1. why the decision has been taken.
      2. what action has been taken.
      3. the duration of that action.
      4. how they can appeal against the decision.
   4. Any restriction that is imposed on the requester’s contact with the Parish Council will be appropriate and proportionate and the requester will be advised of the period over which the restriction will be in place. In most cases restrictions will apply for between three to six months, but in exceptional cases this may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a quarterly basis.
   5. Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the requester and may include:
      1. banning the requester from sending emails to the Parish Clerk and insisting they only correspond by postal letter.
      2. requiring contact to take place with one named member of staff or Councillor only.
      3. letting the requester know that the Parish Council will not respond to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that request.
   6. Where a requester continues to behave in a way that is unacceptable, the Clerk, in consultation with the Council, may decide to refuse all contact with the requester and stop any investigation into his or her request.
   7. Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of employees or Councillors, other options will be considered, e.g. the reporting of the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the requester may not be given prior warning of that action.
5. **New requests from requesters who are treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent**
   1. New requests from people whose contact has triggered this policy will be treated on their merits. The Clerk and the Council will decide whether any restrictions that have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new request. A blanket policy is not supported, nor is ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.
   2. The fact that a requester is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and any restrictions imposed on Council’s contact with him or her, will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the Council at the discretion of the Clerk.
6. **Review**
   1. The status of a requester judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be reviewed by the Clerk and the Council after three months and at the end of every subsequent three months within the period during which the policy is to apply.
   2. The requester will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy has been changed or extended.
7. **Record Keeping**
   1. The Clerk will retain adequate records of the details of the case and the action that has been taken. Records will be kept of:
      1. the name and address of each member of the public who is treated as abusive, vexatious, or persistent, or any other person who so aids the requester.
      2. when the restrictions came into force and end.
      3. what the restrictions are.
      4. when the person was advised.
   2. The Parish Council will be provided with a regular report giving information about members of the public who have been treated as vexatious/persistent as per this policy, as a confidential matter.
8. **Appeals**
   1. Appeals against the Council’s decision can be made to the Council in writing within 5 working days of the receipt of the decision. The Council will review the decision and address any points made in the Appeal correspondence. The outcome of this review will be final.

**Document History**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Author** | **Date** | **Changes** | **Status** | **Minute ref** |
| 1.0 | A Youel | 12-01-2023 |  | Draft |  |
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Map

Description automatically generated

**23/39**

**Sealed Knot 360 anniversary event**To consider hosting and funding 360 anniversary event.

**23/43**



**Middleton Cheney Parish Council**

**Cllr Richard Solesbury-Timms  
Cllr Kay Stevens  
Cllr Kristian Burgess**

380 ANNIVERSARY

**Battle of Middleton Cheney**

3rd - 4th June

**Event Plan**

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## Executive Summary

The 380 Anniversary Battle of Middleton Cheney will be a Sealed Knot commemorative re-enactment event. “The Sealed Knot brings history to life by staging events throughout the country all year round, offering a chance to experience at first hand the horrors of a nation at war with itself, as well as providing a glimpse of everyday life in those days”.   
A site at Astrop Road is planned to host a new information board of the Battle of Middleton Cheney which occurred in 1643, and a memorial plaque is planned for All Saints to commemorate the 46 fatalities of the skirmish. As 2023 marks 380 years since the Battle, an opportunity has been presented by the Sealed Knot to tie in the new memorial features with a re-enactment event at the Middleton Cheney. The event will see Sealed Knot members camp in Burgess Farm 2nd – 5th June, with visitor events planned at Burgess Farm across the weekend of 3rd – 4th June (rescheduled from original 6th May skirmish date due to the King’s Coronation and connected events). The outline schedule provided by the Sealed Knot is a 2 day mini muster event for up to 200 Sealed Knot attendees who will provide a “Living History” camp, performance activities and educational visits within the village.

With the planned outcome of a successful village event, the Parish Council will have a robust framework to refer to for future event planning and may confidently springboard into further event commitments within the community. The success of the event will be monitored by observing quantity and ages of attendees as well as providing opportunities for visitors to feedback to the Parish Council for future event planning.

## Context

The English Civil War describes the religion and monarchy roused wars between 1642 and 1651. A year into the English Civil War and following a lull of Wintertime fighting, the Battle of Middleton Cheney was a short-lived clash in which parliamentarians advanced and sought to take control of Banbury. Due to royalist response, a parliamentarian retreat was ordered, and was pursued by a royalist detachment. In the ‘Towne Field’ to the south of the village of Middleton Cheney the parliamentarians decided to make a stand.

**BATTLE DATA**

**NAME:**Battle of Middleton Cheney

**DATE:** 6 May 1643

**WAR PERIOD:** Civil Wars

**START TIME AND DURATION:** mid-afternoon, lasting less than half an hour

**OUTCOME:**Royalist Victory

**ARMIES:** Royalist force of about 600 cavalry commanded by James Compton, Earl of Northampton; Parliamentarian detachment of 600 foot and 120-150 cavalry with one six pound drake ordnance, possibly commanded by the Major of Colonel Berkley’s Northampton garrison regiment. Losses: 50-220, mainly parliamentarians

**LOCATION:** approximately located in the fields south of the village and fought across common field / hill and valley

## Event Overview

The 380 Anniversary Battle of Middleton Cheney will be a commemorative event of the Royalist vs Parliamentarian skirmish that occurred in the village on 6th May 1643. 46 of the battle’s fatalities were buried in the churchyard of All Saints in Middleton Cheney. In the same manner as the Sealed Knot’s re-enactment event for the [375th Anniversary Battle of Cropredy Bridge](https://www.facebook.com/cropredy375/), this event will inspire a connection for residents with their local history, provide education to local children and provide opportunity for formal commemoration of those who died during the battle. There is also potential for a boost to local services who may be able to position themselves at the learning village / camping site over the event weekend.

Date:  
Campers and provisions required: Friday 2nd June 2023 – Monday 5th June 2023  
Visitor events: Saturday 3rd June 2023 – Sunday 4th June 2023

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Camping | Next to Burgess Farm |
| Living History village | Next to Burgess Farm |
| Performance activities | Next to Burgess Farm |
| Parking | Next to Burgess Farm |
| Memorial ceremonies | Astrop board, All Saints Plaque |
| Parades | Washle – Main Road – Queen Street – All Saints |
| Church service | All Saints Sunday service |
| Other activities provided by village groups | Consider Scouts, Library, Historical society. |

Purpose:  
Education, community engagements, commemoration.

Need:  
A unique opportunity for commemoration that will highlight the village’s history. An event to encourage positive engagement with Parish Council and its aim to fil vacancies by showcasing more lively aspects of its remit. Potential boost to local businesses who may be able to position themselves to provide for campers and visitors of the event.

The event has a broad target audience for young and old, particularly for those interested in local and Medieval History. The purpose of the event is to benefit the residents of Middleton Cheney but proper publicity can also encourage engagement with visitors further afield.

## Event Requirements

Facilities and Utilities:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Electricity | None required |  |
| Water | Campers / Living village / (Visitors?) | Water stations using containers ferried from Charmaine |
| Fuel | Living village (/ Campers?) | Firewood - AGU |
| Waste | Living village and visitor areas  End of event site clearance SK own waste management | Old bin barrows to be stationed 1 x entrance, 1 x portaloos, Black bags to be stationed round living village and disposed at PMR large bin. |
| Toilet facilities | Portaloos for Living village / visitors | Quote 1 a 4 x Standard Event Units with hand sanitiser to OX17 2LR  1 x Disabled/EAU Event with hand sanitiser to OX17 2LR  **Please be advised the Disabled Units waste capacity is the same as a Standard unit.** Delivery Friday 2nd June Collection Monday 5th June  = **£383 +VAT**    Quote 1 b  6 x Standard Event Units with hand sanitiser to OX17 2LR  1 x Disabled/EAU Event with hand sanitiser to OX17 2LR  **Please be advised the Disabled Units waste capacity is the same as a Standard unit.** Delivery Friday 2nd June Collection Monday 5th June  = **£527 +VAT**  Quote 2  4 x cold chem event tulu's @ £105+vat each  1 x Disabled access unit @ £125+vat each  Delivery and collection @ £25+vat each way, during normal working hours Monday to Friday.  =£595+vat |
| Accommodation | SK Campers | SK provide own tents next to Burgess Farm |
| Catering | Visitors | PC to invite local businesses and offer a permit. Catering not provided / funded by PC. |

Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fire safety | Camping / Living village | SK provide fire safety equipment for camping / Living village  Fire marshals?  Contact fire station |
| Health and Safety | Living village / Visitors | Source H&S lead – SK own?  Identify requirements from SNC events |
| Security | Living village / Visitors | Marshals |
| Medical | Camping / Living village / Visitors | St Johns Ambulance? |
| Traffic management | Site access / Parade | Confirm with SNC events/ Highways |

Legal and Insurance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wet weather / event insurance | Not needed |  |
| Public Liability | Parish Council under Insurance policy |  |
| Risk assessments | To be completed – HSE website guidance for events. |  |

## Marketing & Communications Plan

Puritans / Horton radio

Cheney Chatter

Leaflets to public amenities

Posters

Social Media adverts to local community and historical groups

Website advert

## Financial Plan & Considerations

Consider charges for parking / entrance / raffle?

Free event, subsidised or fully covered by ticket sales?

**Middleton Cheney Event 3rd & 4th of June 2023 Draft Budget   
William Gordon’s Regiment of Foote**   
  
Draft Budget figures for a two day mini muster event with an upper limit of 200 sealed knot attendees.   
  
1/ SK camping amenities provision 900   
1/ SK “Living History” camp provision 350   
1/ SK Performance activities 1200   
4/ SK Educational visits 200

**Total £2650**

**Example Schedule of Events each day:**   
10.00 SK Living history camp opens to public   
10.30 to 11.30 Reenactment cameo’s and drill displays   
12.00 to 12.30 Full Parade   
12.30 Memorial Ceremony with salute   
13.00 Battlefield Trust Plaque unveiling and dedication (Dignitaries and SK big wigs)   
14.30 Pre-Performance Muster for Battle   
15.00 Battle Performance   
15.40 Closing Parade of Armies   
16.30 Living history closes to public   
  
Timings and events will vary e.g the memorial ceremony and plaque unveiling will happen on either the Saturday or Sunday. On the Sunday a Church parade can be organised if not conflicting with other events  
  
**Notes and assumptions:**   
1/ SK camping amenities including: Fire safety equipment, toilet facilities, waste disposal arrangements, camp security arrangements. Amenities will cover camping from Friday 2nd evening to Monday 5th morning.   
2/ SK living history camp costs includes: fire safety equipment, waste disposal arrangements, camp security arrangements,   
3/ SK Performance Activities including: Black Powder purchase/ supply and distribution, Medical Cover, Public Liability Insurance, Performance security, PA system, Performance consumables.   
4/ SK Education Visits includes: 2 visits to local groups e.g. Youth Group Evening or Senior Group Evening   
  
**Assumptions: (MCPC here refers to Middleton Cheney Parish Council)**a/ MCPC will ensure appropriate space for modern camping, living history camping and a performance area as discussed.   
b/ MCPC will ensure adequate wood supply for the living history camp fires.   
c/ MCPC will ensure adequate potable (drinking) water supply to both modern camping areas and the living history camp. These can be in the form of temporary standpipe outlets, otherwise provision for a drinking water bowser will need to be made at additional cost. (Currently no provision has been made under the draft budget above)   
d/ MCPC will ensure adequate toilet facilities are provided at the Performance and other areas for the publics use.

## Management and Business Controls