GRINDON AND THORPE THEWLES PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

INTRODUCTION 3
1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS 3
2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS 3
3. MEETINGS GENERALLY 4
4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES 6
5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS 7
6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES 9
7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS 10
8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS 10
9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER 10
10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE 11
11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION 12
12. DRAFT MINUTES 12
13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS 13
14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS 14
15. PROPER OFFICER 14
16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER 16
17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 16
18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT 17
19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS 18
20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION 19
21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION 19
22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA 20
23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS 20
24. COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS 20
25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES 20
26. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY 20
27. APPENDIX 1 - Policies and Procedures 27

INTRODUCTION

STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of an organisation (in this case the Parish Council). Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. The Parish Council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of the Parish Council are not the same as the policies of the Parish Council but standing orders may refer to them.

1. **RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS**

a Agenda items shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.

b When an agenda item is under debate, no other item shall be moved except:

i. to amend the proposal following the debate

ii. to proceed to the next business

iii. to adjourn the debate

iv. to put the item and decision to a vote

v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting

vi. to refer an action 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.

c. Before a decision is put to the vote, the Chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the issue has been sufficiently debated and that relevant facts have been discussed.

d. The contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the item under discussion and shall not exceed 3 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 for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**

● 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 15 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 may stand if

they choose

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. (**refer to Council's Recording of Meetings Policy**)**

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. (**refer to Council's Recording of Meetings Policy and Media Policy**)**

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 Parish Council.**

p **The Chair of the Parish Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council 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 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 Parish Council at the annual meeting of the Parish 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

iii. interests that have been declared by councillors

iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors

v. whether a councillor 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 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 three Councillors 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 Parish 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 Parish Council.**

c **Unless the Parish 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 (5) 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 PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Parish 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 Parish Council shall be held on such day in May as the Parish Council decides.**

c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Parish Council shall take place at 6.30pm.**

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

e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Parish Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.**

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

g **The Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, , unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Parish Council at the next annual meeting of the Parish Council.**

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

j Following the election of the Chair of the Parish Council and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Parish Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Parish 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 Parish Council (if newly appointed)of their acceptance of office form unless the Parish 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 and

staff

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 Parish 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 Parish Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies

xvi. Review of the Parish Council's policies.

xvii. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Parish Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Parish Council.

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

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

b **If the Chair of the Parish Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Parish 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 Parish 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 (7) days of having been requested to do so by (2) members of the committee [or the sub-committee], any (2) 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 (5) 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 suitable persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Parish 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 Parish Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Parish 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 (5) 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 (4) 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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

e **The Parish Council 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 shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Parish Council.

b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor 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 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 Parish Council's area; or

iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a Upon notification by the Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.

b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of the Parish Council of this fact.

c The Parish Council may:

i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement

ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.

d **Upon notification by the Unitary Council that a councillor has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Parish Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

a The Proper Officer shall be the clerk.

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 Parish 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 (5) days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it

iii. **convene a meeting of the Parish Council for the election of a new Chair of the Parish Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office**

iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by electors within the Parish**

v. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors

vi. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests

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

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

ix. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Parish 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)

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

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

xii. record every planning application notified to the Parish Council and the Parish Council's response to the local planning authority in the Minutes of the meeting at which it was discussed

xiii. refer a planning application received by the Parish Council to the Chair or in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council 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 Parish Council

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

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

a The Parish 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 Parish Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Parish Council's financial regulations.

c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor each month a list of Financial Transactions undertaken since the last meeting together with a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlight 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 Parish Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for tthe year to date for information; and

ii. to the Parish 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 Parish Council (receipts and payments) 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 Parish Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Parish Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Parish Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

a. The Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and

   v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** 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. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(f) is subject to Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include a requirement on the Parish Council to advertise the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website regardless of what other means it uses to advertise the opportunity unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**

d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Parish 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 Parish Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Parish 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. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in any manner that is deemed appropriate by the Parish Council

iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer

v. 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

vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Parish Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.

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

f. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £181,302 for a public service or supply contract or in excess of £4,551,413 for a public works contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which include advertising the contract opportunity on the Contracts Finder website.**

g. **A public contract in connection with the supply of gas, heat, electricity, drinking water, transport services, or postal services to the public; or the provision of a port or airport; or the exploration for or extraction of gas, oil or solid fuel with an estimated value in excess of £363,424 for a supply, services or design contract; or in excess of £4,551,413 for a works contract; or £820,370 for a social and other specific services contract shall comply with the relevant procurement procedures and other requirements in the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Parish Council or Personnel committee] is subject to standing order 11.

b Subject to the Parish Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Parish Clerk shall notify the Chair of the Parish Council or, if they are not available, the Chair of the Personnel Committee, of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Parish Council at its next meeting.

c The Chair of the Personnel committee shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Parish Council.

d Subject to the Parish Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Parish Clerk shall contact the Chair of the Parish Council in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back

and progressed in accordance with the Parish Council's Grievance Procedure.

e Subject to the Parish Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the Chair, this shall be communicated to the Chair of the Personnel committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Personnel 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 Parish Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Parish Council.**

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

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

c **The Parish 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.**

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

e **The Parish 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 Parish Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Parish 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 Parish Council unless authorised by a resolution.

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

24. **COMMUNICATING WITH UNITARY AUTHORITY COUNCILLORS**

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

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

25. **RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

a. Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:

i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Parish 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 Parish 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 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.

c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Parish 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.

APPENDIX 1 - Alphabetical list of Policies and Procedures

- Appraisal Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection, Record Management and Security Policy
- Dignity at Work – Bullying and Harassment
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Equalities and Diversity Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Financial Regulations
- Financial Transactions Procedure
- Grants and Donations Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Health & Safety Policy
- Media & Recording of Meetings Policy
- Persistent & Vexatious Complaints and Correspondence Policy
- Risk Management Policy (and Annual Risk Assessment document)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sickness & Absence Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Transparency Code
- Use of Thorpe Thewles Village Green Policy

Amended: April 2026