

Present; Cllr Caroline Hubbard (Chair), Cllr Clive White (Vice Chair) Cllr Jacqui Bonnin, Cllr Sue Robinson.
Clerk; Helen Klaassen
Members of the Public; None.

- 19/088 Apologies for Absence.** **Action**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Thomas, Austin, Eyre, Cllr Mans, Cllr Tipp and Mrs Oliver.
- 19/089 Disclosure of Interest in an Agenda Item.**
None declared.
- 19/090 Public Participation**
None.
- 19/091 Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Full Council Meeting as a Correct Record of Proceedings, and Matters Arising / Action Updates From those Minutes.**
The minutes were approved and the Chair signed them.
- 19/092 Reports.** To receive reports and relevant information from;
 1. **County and District Councillors**
 2. **Committee Chairs**
 3. **Parish Councillors**
 4. **Police / Neighbourhood Watch.**None.
- 19/093 Policies.**
To review and adopt (appendix 1);
 - Grievance Policy
 - Sickness Absence Policy
 - Equality Policy
 - Grant Awarding Policy.An amendment to the Grant awarding policy was made; to consider all applications during the middle of the financial year (September) and a limit should be placed on them of £200 per application. **Clerk**
It was agreed to revisit the total amount to be allocated to the S137 account at a later date. **Clerk**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve all four policies.
- 19/094 Village Fete Update.**
It was agreed to continue organisation of the fete, an update would be given at a later date
- 19/095 Co-option of a Councillor.**
It was **AGREED** in the event of no election being called, to co-opt a new councillor.
- 19/096 Business Continuity.**
Motion;
To consider extending the delegation of Council decisions to the Clerk during any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus. Such delegation to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory requirements, responsibilities to its residents and to its employees and suppliers (appendix 2).
Motion AGREED.
In addition, it was agreed to form a Crisis Management Team consisting of Cllrs Hubbard, White, Bonnin and Robinson to assist the Clerk in carry out her responsibilities under her delegated powers.

Given that the Clerk would likely be shielding, a process for cheque signing was discussed and **AGREED**; Cllr Hubbard would hold the cheque book, write the cheques and get them signed, following the Clerk preparing a pdf requiring signatures from the signatories (Cllrs Hubbard, White,

Thomas). The information would be sent to all councillors for information. Cllr Hubbard would send out the cheques.

Cllrs Robinson and Bonnin would be added to the NatWest Bank mandate as signatories.

The Parish Council would assist with coordinating any local efforts to provide support. Currently awaiting info from other groups regarding what they intend to do.

Clerk

It was noted that should any working group meetings be required, Zoom could be used.

19/097 Accounts and Clerk's Update.

Payments were approved (appendix 3).

19/098 Risk Assessment. To review and approve the measures identified in the Risk Assessment (appendix 4).

It was **AGREED** to accept the measures identified in the Risk Assessment and to refer to the F&R Committee for follow up.

Clerk

19/099 Correspondence.

- Flower Festival

It was **AGREED** that should the Flower Festival go ahead, The Clerk and Cllr Hubbard would prepare a floral arrangement. Any expenditure would come from the Chair's Allowance.

**Clerk/
CH**

19/100 Employee Matters.

It was RESOLVED TO Exclude the Press and Public. Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, a resolution is required to exclude the public and press to protect the confidential nature of the business to be transacted during consideration of this item.

It was RESOLVED to move the Clerk to point 21 of the SCP scales and to increase working hours to 18 per week.

It was also agreed that the Clerk would keep a note of any additional hours undertaken.

19/101 Items for Discussion at the Next Meeting.

- S137 Amount
- Fete
- Co-option of a Councillor.

Meeting concluded at 9pm.

Signed:

Date: _____

Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council



Grievance Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice (<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174>). It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. (https://www.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf). It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.

2. This policy confirms:

- a) employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for his /her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case.
- b) the Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date
- c) any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council
- d) an employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final
- e) information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- f) audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- g) if an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure
- h) if a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if he/she raised the grievance in good faith
- i) the Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties
- j) Employees can use all stages of the grievance procedure If the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a Councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure (paragraph 3) to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a Councillor Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a Councillor. If the complaint about the Councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of New Forest District Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure (see paragraph 4)
- k) If the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a Councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment, for example by undertaking risk assessments, by ensuring staff and Councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination

- l) If an employee considers that the grievance concerns his or her safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a Councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with his or her line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies (for example its health and safety policy or its dignity at work policy) and in accordance with the code of conduct regime.

3. **Informal grievance procedure**

The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with his/her manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with his/her manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chairman of the Finance & Resources committee or, if appropriate, another member of the Finance & Resources committee. If the employee's complaint is about a Councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that Councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the Councillor's consent.

4. **Formal grievance procedure**

- a) If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Finance & Resources committee.
- b) The Finance & Resources committee will appoint a sub-committee of three members to hear the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.

5. **Investigation**

- a) If the sub-committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, Councillors or members of the public).
- b) The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the sub-committee.

6. **Notification**

Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:

- the names of its Chairman and other members
- the date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance
- the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official
- a copy of the Council's grievance policy
- confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting
- confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice
- findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation
- an invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).

7. **The Grievance Meeting**

At the grievance meeting:

- the Chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee
- the employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence
- the Chairman will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action he/she wants the Council to take
- any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness
- the employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case

- a grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.

The Chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, usually within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

8. The Appeal

If an employee decides that his/her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Finance & Resources committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.

Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:

- a failure by the Council to follow its grievance policy
- the decision was not supported by the evidence
- the action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate
- new evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.

The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Finance & Resources committee who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the Finance & Resources committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of three Council members who may include members of the Finance & Resources committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:

- introduce the panel members to the employee
- explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the Finance & Resources sub-committee
- explain the action that the appeal panel may take.

The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.

The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.

The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Finance & Resources committee or substitute its own decision.

The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

1. What to do if you are unwell

If you are away from work because of sickness you must:

- Telephone [your line manager / the Clerk], before your contractual (or normal start time for work) on the first day of absence providing details and how long you expect to be off. If you are unable to call personally, someone else may call for you. It is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified. You must then telephone again each day (unless otherwise agreed with your line manager / the Clerk).
- If you are away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), you must complete a self-certification form and provide it to the council when you are back at work.
- If you are away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), you must send in a 'fit to work' statement from your doctor and continue to do so as each new certificate is issued to you. This certificate gives details as to whether you are too ill to work or whether you are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council. This gives you and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support your return to work. The form also gives more space for the doctor to provide information about your condition and helpful tick boxes to suggest common ways to help you return to work.
- All sickness or injury absence will be entered on your employment record and will be monitored from time-to-time.

2. Return-to-work meetings

On the first day back at work after a period of sickness absence your manager may want to meet informally. If this is not possible on your first day back, the meeting may take place later. The return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions should be private and confidential. The meeting would normally include

- a welcome back to work;
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting; which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate;
- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way and to understand whether the council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance;
- explain that the absence will be recorded;
- establish if medical advice has been sought (if appropriate);
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a fit note from the doctor has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps; and
- a handover of work where appropriate.

3. Medical Appointments

The council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the council. The council will allow reasonable time off work [with pay or time in lieu] for such appointments.

4. Council's Sick Pay (Occupational Sick Pay)

It is the Council's policy to pay you your normal basic rate of pay exclusive of overtime/allowances during periods of sickness absence of up to [1 month] [and half pay for a further 1 month]. This occupational sick pay will be for absences due to sickness calculated over the previous 52 weeks and will include your entitlement to SSP.

Payment is, however, conditional upon you complying with the council's procedure for notifying your manager of the absence, attending an interview with your manager on request to discuss the absence, and completing a self-certification form on return to work or providing a fit-note when requested. We may also ask you to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor at the request of the Council.

We may not pay you occupational sick pay where:

- you have failed to comply with the Council's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- you unreasonably refuse to attend a sickness absence meeting with the Council on request;
- you are unable to work because you hurt yourself in dangerous sports / activities or any other occupation you have;
- you have misled the council about your fitness to work;
- you have resigned; or
- where disciplinary proceedings are pending against you.

5. Medical advice

The Council may want to obtain advice on your fitness for work from occupational health advisers or medical practitioners. Examples of when the Council might refer to occupational health or a medical practitioner include the following:

- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury;
- to establish when you might be able to return to work;
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties;
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition;
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work;
- to understand the likely recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work; and
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability if you are disabled.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you.

If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

6. Persistent short-term absence

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness. We understand most employees will have some short-term sickness absence from time to time. However, if you are frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on your colleagues and councillors.

Therefore, it is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently and in some circumstances, the Council may begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process. If we do so, we will meet with you to set attendance targets. Following a review meeting we may issue a formal warning if those targets are not met. You will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting and you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. You may appeal against a formal warning. If your absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the council may bring your employment to an end following consultation with you.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition then we will also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician or your G.P. or consultant to establish further information about your health and how the council can support your attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the council will not consider any pregnancy related absence. The council will also make adjustments where absences are related to a disability by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The council will consider any alternative employment options before making any decision about ending employment. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal sanction. The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

7. Long-term absence

As a guide, long term absence is any absence which lasts or is expected to last over 4 weeks. In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with you. In cases where the return date is less certain this will take the form of consultation and will include:

- Discussions at the start of the absence and periodically throughout
- Obtaining better information on your health and likely prognosis, ideally through an Occupational Health Physician
- Where appropriate alerting you to the fact that your absence is becoming a problem, and
- Allowing you the opportunity to state your opinion of your condition and giving consideration to that opinion

Where ill-health means that you are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the council may need to consider bringing your employment to an end. In these circumstances, the council will:

- Review your absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult with you
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice
- Advise you in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility

- Discuss whether you may be able to access benefits from the Local Government Pension Scheme (where appropriate)
- Meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing you to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- Review if there are any alternative jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health
- Following this meeting, inform you of the final decision

8. Absence as a result of disability

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010 (formerly as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

9. Data protection

The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data will be provided in our employee privacy notice. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

— policy ends here —

Notes

1. Green Book terms

If the council adopts Green Book terms and conditions of employment, employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods: -

During 1st year of service

1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service)

2 months half pay

During 2nd year of service

2 months full pay and

2 months half pay

During 3rd year of service

4 months full pay and

4 months half pay

During 4th and 5th year of service

5 months full pay and

5 months half pay

After 5 years' service

6 months full pay and

6 months half pay

The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Periods of full pay will include SSP. In periods of half pay, employees receive half pay in addition to SSP provided the total does not exceed normal pay.

If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended.

2. Council's Sick Pay

The legal requirement is to pay Statutory Sick Pay (subject to eligibility) and anything additional is for the council to decide. Any additional sick pay is known as 'occupational sick pay' (OSP). The council will need to commit to paying any OSP it decides to offer and take into account the cost of National Insurance and the cost of any temporary staff required to cover the absence.

It would be unusual to bring an employment contract to an end before the occupational sick pay expires.

If a member of staff already has a paid sick leave entitlement, you cannot unilaterally change their entitlement. Councils can change the policy for all new staff joining after a defined date provided this is consistently applied.

3. Return-to-work meetings

Return to work meetings should ideally take place following every absence, with notes taken, agreed and stored on file. They are especially important if the absence has been caused by, or related to incidents at work. Having a written record of a return to work meeting may help the council defend later claims or allegations.

Sometimes it is not practical to have return to work interviews after every absence so councils may decide to do so only after 2 absences in a 2-month period, or where the absence is work-related.

4. Medical appointments

There is no legal requirement to pay time off for medical appointments, except antenatal appointments. Please see the Maternity and Parental leave policies for details.

A council may decide that staff should make up the time (if possible) or take it without pay. If a council decides to offer payment for medical appointments, it is sensible to put some limit on this.

5. Medical advice

Health information is considered to be personal sensitive information under Data Protection legislation and particular care must be taken when processing medical information. The Information Commissioner website (<https://ico.org.uk>) contains guidance.

An Occupational Health report can comment on an individual's health in relation to the employee's role. It will be important to provide the OH physician or nurse a referral form with full details of the employee's job, the concerns you have about their health in relation to their work and be specific about the questions you need answering. Any report should then be discussed with the employee before the council decides on any follow up actions. If the report makes recommendations, these must be carefully considered and discussed with the employee.

6. Health and wellbeing

All employers have duty to provide a safe place of work which includes the physical environment as well as mental health. There are a range of initiatives that can promote health and wellbeing (see Fit for Work: <https://fitforwork.org>). Also, the Health and Safety Executive has useful information on their website including a stress risk assessment (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/risk-assessment.htm).

Guidance

Where there is text in [square brackets] this part may be updated or be deleted if not relevant. An alternative option may have been provided.

Important notice

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment. This document was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 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 to publication.

This document has been written by the HR Services Partnership – a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils. Please contact them on 01403 240 205 for information about their services.

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Aims and Purposes of the Policy.

Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our employees and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The Parish Council - in providing services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as good practice
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
This commitment includes training all employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

- make opportunities for training, development and progression available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues

Grant Awarding Policy

1. Aims and Purposes of the Policy.

Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council have the power to offer groups, clubs and charities in the village the opportunity to apply for grants. This policy sets out the parameters within which the Parish Council can offer that support.

2. Who Can Apply for a Grant?

Groups, clubs, charities or not-for-profit organisations, either based in the villages of Ashurst and Colbury. Groups based outside this area must be able to prove that their work benefits a significant section of the parish.

We cannot offer grants to schools or religious organisations and will not accept applications from individual residents or commercial organisations, political parties or lobbying groups or associations, or national charities.

Requests for grants will considered from Parent/Teacher Associations where the funding will meet a need not ordinarily covered by school funding (e.g. play equipment).

Grants for day to day running or maintenance costs will not be considered.

Grants for projects that have already started will be considered, but applicants must provide strong evidence for the need for further funds.

3. Conditions.

- a. Applicants must prove that their activities, and the grant being requested, will directly benefit residents of Ashurst and Colbury.
- b. Groups must be formally convened, with a management committee and a constitution, or some form of governing document.
- c. Applicants will be expected to provide supporting information;
 - Current bank statements, income / expenditure sheets and, if possible, a balance sheet
 - a description of what the funds will be spent on and when
 - evidence of an attempt to identify best value for the grant (e.g. 3 quotations).
- d. Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Parish Council, who will give fair consideration to the request in line with the Parish Council's objectives.
- e. Any grant awarded must only be spent on the purpose it was obtained for. Any unspent grant should be returned to the Parish Council.
- f. Grants awarded will not exceed £200.
- g. Grants applications will be considered annually in September.

4. Procedure.

- a. Applications must be made in writing to the Clerk.
- b. Following receipt of the application form and supporting documents, the request will be considered at the next meeting of the full council and applicants advised within 10 working days if their application has been successful. Payment will be via cheque.
- c. Should the application be unsuccessful, the applicant will be informed in writing and reasons for refusal given.

5. GDPR

The Parish Council will process this application in line with our GDPR Information and Disposal Policy, which can be found on our website; www.ashurstandcolbury-pc.gov.uk.

Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council - Grant Application Form

Name of Organisation;	Office Use / Criteria Met
Address;	
Telephone: _____ Email: _____	
Main Contact for Correspondence:	
Website:	
Payee for Cheque:	
How many Members are there in your Organisation;	
Registered Charity No. if Applicable:	
Please describe your Organisation and its purpose:	
Please describe your project;	
What exactly will the grant funding pay for if successful;	
Estimated Expenditure of the total project: £	
How much grant funding are you seeking from the Parish Council (Max £200): £	
How will you fund the balance of the project?	
Have you applied to another organisation for a grant for this project?	
How many have benefited from your organisation in the last 12 months, within this Parish and in what way:	
Please enclose a set of Annual Accounts for your Organisation.	
Please enclose quotations for the project, work or equipment.	
Signed: _____ (on behalf of the organisation)	
Name: _____ Position: _____	
Please send the completed application to; Helen Klaassen, Clerk and RFO, Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council, Parish Council Office, Colbury Church Rooms, Deerleap Lane, Colbury, SO40 7EH. Or via email; parishclerk@ashurstandcolbury-pc.gov.uk	

Appendix 2

Pandemic Procedure.

The Council recognises the need to have a separate pandemic recovery plan and procedure. The reason for this is that a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme whereas, for example, in circumstances where a public health emergency is confirmed such as the Coronavirus, the effects of the pandemic could last many months.

The following procedure sets out the contingency measures that the Council will bring into effect in the event of a pandemic.

The procedure aims to ensure that the Council will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities in such an event while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its employees.

Procedure

The Clerk and Councillors are responsible for ensuring that employees understand the Council's pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the procedure and should speak to the Clerk should they have any questions.

- The Council will identify a Pandemic Crisis Management Team. The team will consist of the Clerk, Chairman of the Parish Council and other appropriate councillors and staff
- Members of the Pandemic Crisis Management Team will be trained in how to respond to a pandemic.
- In the event of a pandemic, members of the team will be expected to exercise leadership and make operational and business decisions in accordance with delegated authority.
- As a contingency measure, employees / Councillors will be trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles.
- A pandemic communications strategy will be developed to ensure that employees are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic. Information will be provided to employees via e-mail and through team meetings. As well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, has the virus. Employees will also be provided with instructions regarding personal hygiene to avoid spread of the virus.

The Council's leave and absence policies will be reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes. This includes the Council's policies on sickness absence, time off for dependants and bereavement leave.

Employees may be required to observe several measures put in place by us to keep the risk of infection to an absolute minimum. Whilst advice will be published at the time in question to ensure it is specific to the pandemic, it is likely that rules will include:

- social distancing at work such as maintaining at least one metre distance between participants in essential meetings, avoiding unnecessary travel, cancellation of face-to-face meetings and working from home
- increased levels of hygiene management including keeping hands clean and coughing and sneezing into tissues which are immediately disposed of
- a requirement for employees to adhere to Government guidance on management of symptoms and self-isolation where recommended.

The above policy and procedure will be continuously reviewed and updated to take account of the changing status of a pandemic.

Specific Areas for delegation (Local Government Act 1972, s101, 1(a);

Item	Action / Delegation	Duration
Full Council Meetings	Decision regarding continuance to be delegated to Clerk and Chairman / Vice Chair / in line with Government Advice, if any.	As long as Government advises.
Committee Meetings	Suspended in line with Full Council Meetings Clerk to confer with Committee Chairs if required.	For as long as full council meetings suspended.
Payments	Cheques to be pre-signed by Councillors, Clerk to send payments via email for validation from all Councillors, including scanned emails and written cheques.	For as long as full council meetings suspended.
Employee Isolation	If it becomes necessary Clerk to work from home, temporary reinstatement of working from home allowance £18pm, £4.15 pw.	For as long as Government advises.

Clerks Emergency Expenditure Level	To be raised to £500. Amounts from £250 to £500 to be cleared with Chairman / Vice Chair before committing.	For as long as full council meetings suspended.
Planning Applications	Clerk to collate responses via email.	For as long as full council meetings suspended.
Clerk's Absence	Laptop and mobile, and passwords to be passed to the Chairman for monitoring. Consideration to be given to the engagement of a Locum if absence over 2 weeks. Decision to be taken by Chair and Vice Chair.	After first 5 working days, if absence likely to be longer. Until return to work date set

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - 17.03.2020

Payments To be Made					
Date	Payee	Details	Chq	Amount	VAT
03.03.2020	A Baker	Salary	2471	156.00	
17.03.2020	VOID	VOID	2472	VOID	
17.03.2020	A Baker	Salary	2473	156.00	
17.03.2020	HMRC	NIC mth 12	2474	11.34	
17.03.2020	Nightingale Ground Care	Rec and Allot Maint	2475	243.90	40.65
17.03.2020	TLC	Website maint J,F,M 20	2476	45.00	
17.03.2020	Hants and IOW CRC	Cps at allotments	2477	90.00	
17.03.2020	Lightatouch	Audit services	2478	401.25	
17.03.2020	H Klaassen	Salary and Expenses	2479	772.21	
			Total	1,875.70	40.65

Appendix 4.

No.	Internal Control Tests	Findings
1	Proper Bookkeeping	
1.1	Is the Cash Book maintained and up to date? Format used?	The Cash Book is maintained on an Excel Spreadsheet format and includes budget information incorporating all accounts held which is up to date and accurate. It was prepared up to 31 st December 2019.
1.2	Is the Cash Book arithmetically correct?	The Cash Book continues to be analysed into Budget head codes for both receipts and payments and this practice should be continued to provide adequate budgetary control for the Parish Council
1.3	Is the Cash Book regularly balanced?	The Cash Book is balanced quarterly by Parish Clerk/RFO and confirmed by full Bank Reconciliations. Recommendation: We recommend that Bank Reconciliations are signed by the Chairman at least on a half yearly basis to confirm they are accurate, and that the Councillor monitoring role is undertaken.
2a	Standing Orders and Financial Regulations	
2.1	Has the Council formally adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and dates approved?	Standing Orders were reviewed and were adopted at the Parish Council meeting on 18 June 2019 (Minute reference 19/024). Financial Regulations were reviewed on 18 June 2019. These were adopted at the Parish Council meeting 15/05/2019 (Minute ref 19/024). Audit Note: It is noted the Parish Clerk will be reviewing the documentation during 2020/2021 to ensure that the updated NALC model Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are adopted by the Council.
2.2	Has an RFO been appointed with specific duties noted in both contract and Financial Regulations?	The Parish Clerk is the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and the duties are detailed in both her Contract of Employment and Financial Regulations.
2.3	Have items or services above a de minimis amount been competitively purchased?	It is noted that the adoption of Financial Regulations on the May 2019 sets out the number and levels for which quotations and tenders should be obtained.
2b	Payments Controls	
2.4	Are payments in the Cash Book supported by invoices, authorised and Minuted?	Proper invoices support all payments, which are cross-referenced by cheque number and date paid. Monthly payment schedules are prepared by the Parish Clerk for the Parish Council meeting. This is approved, and details will be noted in the Minutes for the meeting. Currently 2 Councillors and the Clerk are mandated to sign cheques and countersign invoices and cheque stubs.

2.5	Has VAT on payments been checked, recorded and reclaimed? Frequency, and refunds into which Account.	VAT is recorded on the Payments spreadsheet and the information can be cross- referenced to the Invoices held on file. The Clerk has indicated that no VAT reimbursement forms have been submitted to HMRC since 2018. Audit Note: The best practice requirements of HMRC is that Parish Councils should submit a VAT reimbursement claim form at least once a year. This is supported by the information detailed in the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities (Practitioners Guide 2019.) Recommendation: We recommend that the Parish Clerk should submit a VAT reimbursement claim before the end of the financial year 2019/20.
2.6	Is S.137 expenditure separately recorded & in limit?	Payments of Section 137 are agreed and within the limits available to the Parish Council. Section 137 amount allowed per parishioner for 2019/2020 of £8.32.
3	Risk Management Arrangements	
3.1	Does a scan of the Minutes identify any unusual financial activity, projects, events etc.?	One major project was completed in 2019/2020 to install Play Equipment. Audit Note: Risk assessments should be performed for all major projects and the Parish Council should annually review the risk areas of the Parish Council. Spending decisions should always be referenced to the budget allocations and these should be noted in the Minutes of the Parish Council.
3.2	Do the Minutes record the Council carrying out any annual risk assessments? Play areas/BMX/skateparks regularity of checks and documentation?	Annual play inspections are carried out by ROSPA and the last inspection was undertaken in May 2019. Quarterly play inspections are carried out by Elite Playground Inspections.
3.3	Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate? Policy numbers and broker/company? Fidelity Guarantee cover level correct?	Standard local council policy held with Zurich policy no YLL 2720855423 from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020. Public Liability £10m and Fidelity Guarantee cover showing £150,000.
3.4	Are internal financial controls documented and reviewed regularly?	This initial risk assessment for financial systems' internal controls will be updated annually in future.
4	Budgetary Controls	
4.1	Has the Council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept? Council Minute and date?	The Parish Clerk prepares a draft budget for each committee for review. Committee budgets are reviewed by the Finance and Resources committee who make a precept

		recommendation to the Parish Council each November, which is ratified and Minuted. New Forest District Council is then notified of precept requirements by mid-January. The Council approved 2020/21 precept as £38,614. The precept for 2020/21 was agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 19 th November 2019. This was notified to New Forest District Council of the Parish Council precept requirements in December 2019.
4.2	Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the Council and Minuted?	We checked the Minutes of the Parish Council and the Budget to actual comparisons is reviewed on a regular basis. A half yearly report is taken to the Parish Council for information and appropriate action. A half yearly report was taken to the Parish Council in November 2019.
4.3	Are there any significant and unexplained variances on budget?	We discussed with the Parish Clerk if a process is in place to report significant variations whereby the Parish Clerk will inform the Parish Council of large variations. It is agreed that if any action is required it will be approved by the Parish Council.
5	Income Controls	
5.1	Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	Income sources received from Advertising (Parish Magazine) and Allotments, Fete Income, Grant payments, Interest, VAT refunds, and Precept payments. Sales Invoices are raised for the advertisements placed in the Parish Magazine. Invoices are recorded on a spreadsheet and are cross referenced to payments received. Non-payment reminders are sent via email and followed up with a phone call if non-payment persists. Recommendation: We recommend that details of the receipt information are cross-referenced with the Sales Invoice to show the details of the payment received and the banking details of when the fees are paid into the Parish Council bank account
5.2	Does the precept recorded in the Cash Book agree to the District Council's notification? Yearly review of scale of fees?	Yes. Precept received in April 2019 and September 2019 (two instalments). The first instalment was paid direct into Nat West Bank Current Account No 86878948 on the 29 April 2019 and the second instalment was paid in on the 30 September 2019. Allotment and Advertising fees were reviewed in 2019/20.
5.3	Are security controls over cash adequate and effective?	Very infrequent cash received. If cash is received it is held in locked drawer before it is taken to the bank.

6	Payroll Controls	
6.1	Do staff salaries/wages paid agree with those approved by the Council and what is review frequency?	<p>The Parish Clerk has been employed by the Parish Council since December 2014 and is employed for 15 hours per week. The Parish Clerk is currently on Local Council Scale 1 (7-12) (point 12). The Parish Clerk is currently paid by cheque. The Parish Clerk at present does not belong to a Pension Scheme. A check of the Clerks Contract of Employment was carried out. It is noted that the original Contract of Employment indicates that the salary scale used to appoint the Clerk is Point 12 with the LC1 scale. On checking these details to the payroll information no progression has been given to the Clerk since her employment commenced to progress through the LC1 scale.</p> <p>It is further noted that the Parish Clerk is currently paid overtime hours for meetings. It is good practice for consideration to be given by the Council to offer an increase in hours to offset the payment of overtime hours and to cover the additional tasks undertaken since she commenced in the role.</p> <p>Audit Note: The Council should consider a new Contract of Employment to be produced to coincide with any increase in her hours.</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommend that consideration should be given to allow the Parish Clerk to progress in line with similar sized Parish Councils with progression to point 21 on the L2 scale. Any further progression to higher points on this scale should be confirmed through performance management appraisal and the completion of the CiLCA qualification.</p> <p>It is also noted that a Caretaker/Handyman is employed by the Council on an hourly rate basis.</p>
6.2	Are other expenses to the Clerk/staff reasonable and approved by the Council?	<p>Infrequent car mileage @ 0.45p per mile is paid to the Parish Clerk and administrative expenses are paid for Parish Council administration. Expenses are listed on payment schedule for approval by the Parish Council.</p>
6.3	Have PAYE/National Insurance Contributions/ Pensions been properly operated by Council as an employer? Payment frequencies/method?	<p>No deductions for PAYE are made but NI contributions are deducted and paid to the HMRC on a regular basis.</p>

7	Assets Controls	
7.1	Does Council keep an Asset Register of all assets owned incl. serial numbers.? Annual physical check noted?	A full list of the Assets for the Parish Council is recorded on an Excel Spreadsheet. This shows, where known, the historic cost, assets location, serial number or date purchased if appropriate. It shows the insured value of the item and will record whether an annual physical check of assets has been conducted.
7.2	Are the Asset/Investments Registers up to date, including disposals? Note all Investments held with account numbers.	Yes, the Asset Register showed all asset items, but this was last reviewed in June 2018. Recommendation: We recommend that the Asset Register should be reviewed, brought up to date. This should be approved at a Council meeting before the 31 March 2020.
7.3	Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the Asset Register?	Yes, Asset Register currently shows any insured values.
8	Bank Reconciliation	
8.1	Is there a Bank reconciliation for each account held? Note each Account with bank/branch and account numbers. If relevant, review Money Market transfers and documentation.	Yes: Nat West Bank Current Account No 86878948 and Nat West Bank Business Reserve Account No 75550628. The Bank Reconciliation forms part of the spreadsheet Cash Book. Recommendation: The Bank Reconciliation should be separated from the details of the Cash Book. A template Bank Reconciliation form has been provided to the Clerk and this should be completed and signed each quarter to confirm that the bank reconciliation has been carried out. It is noted that the Clerk is reviewing the possibility of transferring the current Nat West accounts to another banking provider who will provide online banking facilities and allow deposits to be made at the Post Office. Audit Note: We would suggest the due diligence should be completed by the Clerk and a new banking provider is found. It is also suggested that the use of BACS payments and a banking debit card should be approved by the Council so that the processes for the Clerk become more efficient and provide opportunities for online purchasing.
8.2	Are Bank reconciliations conducted on receipt of statements and with what frequency?	All bank accounts are reconciled quarterly.
8.3	Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	There are no unexplained items.

Action Plan for Recommendations			
No.	Recommendations	Actioned by	Date
1.3	We recommend that Bank Reconciliations are signed by the Chairman at least on a half yearly basis to confirm they are accurate, and that the Councillor monitoring role is undertaken.		
2.5	We recommend that the Parish Clerk should submit a VAT reimbursement claim before the end of the financial year 2019/20.		
5.1	We recommend that details of the receipt information are cross-referenced with the Sales Invoice to show the details of the payment received and the banking details of when the fees are paid into the Parish Council bank account		
6.1	We recommend that consideration should be given to allow the Parish Clerk to progress in line with similar sized Paris Councils with progression to point 21 on the L2 scale. Any further progression to higher points on this scale should be confirmed through performance management appraisal and the completion of the CiLCA qualification.		
7.2	We recommend that the Asset Register should be reviewed, brought up to date. This should be approved at a Council meeting before the 31 March 2020		
8.1	The Bank Reconciliation should be separated from the details of the Cash Book. A template Bank Reconciliation form has been provided to the Clerk and this should be completed and signed each quarter to confirm that the bank reconciliation has been carried out.		

Signed _____

Date _____

Internal Auditor

Signed _____

Date _____

RFO