

## Combs Parish Council

I hereby give notice that the Meeting AND ANNUAL MEETING of Combs Parish Council will be held on Monday 13 May 2019 at 7.10pm, or immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting in the Community Centre, Straight Road, Battisford.

The Public and Press are cordially invited to be present. The order of business may be varied at the Chairman's discretion. All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out below.

Signed:  Clerk

### Agenda

1. Election of Chairman and Declaration of Office as Chairman
2. Election of Vice-Chairman
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Public forum
6. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8 April 2019
7. Matters arising from minutes
8. County Councillors Report
9. District Councillors Report
10. Parish Council Chairman's Report
11. Clerk's report
12. Planning
  - a. Applications received for consideration
    - i. DC/19/01724 - Mead Farmhouse, Jacks Lane – Erection of a summerhouse -. Deadline extended to 15 May
    - ii. DC/19/01837 – The Barn, Holy Oak Farm, Church Road – conversion of agricultural building to a dwelling (deadline extended to 15 May)
    - iii. DC/19/01794 – 8 Dwellings to the North of Straight Road, Battisford (deadline 15 May)
    - iv. DC/19/01826- Jockeys Hall, Jockeys Lane – Change in use – deadline 14 May
    - v. DC/19/02077 – Fen Stables, Combs Lane – erection of one dwelling
  - b. Decisions received from MSDC
    - i. DC/19/01102 – Kestrel Barn, Church Road. *Application withdrawn*
    - ii. DC/19/00790 Battisford Cricket Club – *granted*
    - iii. DC/19/01168 – High View, Little London – change of use - *granted*
13. Finance
  - a. Accounts review to date and finance approval; review of S137 expenditure
  - b. Payments received
    - i. T/L Lisa May Pelham - interment £530.00
    - ii. T/L Gertrude May Stammers -inscription £ 90.00
  - c. Payments to hand
    - i. SALC membership - £320.57
    - ii. Suffolk Preservation Society membership renewal - £ 30.00
    - iii. J E Crooks -- cemetery gate & post £680.76
  - d. Charitable donations policy
  - e. Approval of annual figures and exemption from Annual Governance & Accountability (AGAR) return
14. Grants and fundraising
15. Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Asset Register and risk assessment; formalisation of Internal Control Statement.
16. Speed signs
17. Parish newsletter
18. Combs Cemetery / St Mary's Churchyard – including tree survey
19. Correspondence:
20. Any other business for inclusion on the next agenda
21. Date and time of next meeting – Monday 10 June 2019 at 7.30pm

# Standing Orders

DRAFT 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

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# COMBS PARISH COUNCIL

## Introduction

Much of the conduct of parish local government affairs is governed by the Local Government Act 1972 ('LGA72') which, together with any other relevant legislation, is the ultimate authority for those matters. These Standing Orders govern the manner in which (subject to the law) Combs Parish Council ('the Council') carries out its business and responsibilities. They deal with matters that the Council is likely to encounter in its day to day business and are designed to be read and understood by the registered electors of Combs civil parish as much as by the Councillors.

If any unusual circumstances arise which are not covered by these Standing Orders or relevant legislation then reference should be made to the NALC Model Standing Orders which are incorporated herein pursuant to paragraph 16.1 below.

References to the male gender include, for simplicity of drafting only, the female gender. References to 'Chairman' or 'Vice-chairman' shall, if such office-holder is of the female gender, include such title as she may agree with the Council at the start of her office.

## 1. Councillors

- 1.1. Parish Council elections are held every four years, at which all Councillors are elected and will form the Council. Any vacancy on the Council may be filled either by an interim election or by a volunteer being appointed by resolution of the existing Councillors ('co-opted'). A Councillor's primary and overwhelming obligation is to act in what he or she considers are the best interests of the whole parish community.
- 1.2 A Councillor's term of office begins at the first meeting of the Parish Council after his election or appointment (LGA72, s83(4)), when he signs a Declaration of Acceptance and such other forms and declarations as may be required by law. His term of office ends when he resigns or is not re-elected.
- 1.3 Following election or appointment to the Council, each Councillor shall be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, current annual budget, and all current adopted Policies. Each Councillor must observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member may act in such a way that may bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

## **2 Annual Parish Meeting (LGA72, Schedule 12, Part 3)**

- 2.1 The Annual Parish Meeting is a forum for registered electors to discuss parish matters generally. It shall be held between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June inclusive each year, save that in an election year it shall be held after, not before, the election. Although there is no legal requirement for Councillors to attend the Annual Parish Meeting it is the practice in Combs for it to be held immediately before the May Council meeting with all available Councillors present. The Chairman (or failing him/her, the Vice-chairman) of the Council shall take the chair.

## **3. Parish Council Meetings (LGA72, Schedule 12, Part 2)**

- 3.1 Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month except August. These meetings are where the ordinary business of the Council is transacted and Council decisions are made. If however it is necessary for an urgent parish matter to be considered and resolved in the interim, the Chairman may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council, subject to the normal rules for notice.
- 3.2 In a year when there is no ordinary election of parish Councillors the May Council meeting shall be the **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** (this is distinct from the Annual Parish Meeting). In an election year this Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held on or within fourteen days after the day on which the Councillors elected at that election take office (this will usually be the May Council meeting). The first item on the agenda at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council shall be the election of a Chairman and Vice-chairman who shall, unless they resign or become disqualified in the interim, hold office until the election of the next Chairman/Vice-chairman at the next Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
- 3.4 In addition to its usual business, the Council shall at its Annual Meeting review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, all policies and procedures, insurances, subscriptions, associations and any other standing arrangements (including the risk assessment). In addition, the previous year's expenditure under s137 LGA 1972 or the general power of competence shall be reviewed.
- 3.5 An invitation to attend each Council meeting shall be sent to the ward Councillors of the District and County Councils.

## **4. Conduct of meetings**

- 4.1 The conduct of Parish Council meetings is governed by the LGA72, Sch 12, Part 2, paragraphs 7 to 13. These Standing Orders supplement those provisions only, if necessary further supplemented by the NALC Model Standing Orders (see paragraph 16.1 below).

- 4.2 Meetings shall be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation. Unless no other accommodation is reasonably available the meetings shall not be held in premises used for the supply of alcohol.
- 4.3 In addition to serving the appropriate Summons on Councillors, the Clerk shall ensure that public notices are posted on the parish notice boards informing registered electors of the venue, time, date and business to be transacted at the meeting. The notice shall be posted at least three clear working days before the meeting.
- 4.4 The Chairman or, in his absence, the Vice-chairman shall chair meetings. If neither the Chairman nor the Vice-chairman is present, the Councillors shall elect one of their number to chair that meeting, and he/she shall exercise all the powers of the Chairman for that meeting.
- 4.5 Meetings shall be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting for any business which the Chairman deems to be confidential. The reason for that decision shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 4.6 Members of the public may speak at Council meetings, subject to a maximum of three minutes or such longer time as the Chairman may direct.
- 4.7 The agenda for meetings shall be set by the Clerk after discussion with the Chairman. The agenda shall include an opportunity for Councillors to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest in a matter to be discussed. Notwithstanding such opportunity, if a Councillor at any time realises that he or she may have a conflict of interest in the matter being discussed he should declare it forthwith. If a Councillor is in doubt whether he has a conflict or potential conflict of interest then he should err on the side of transparency and declare it.
- 4.8 In order to allow Councillors time for mature consideration before decisions are made, and to notify registered electors who may be interested in a particular matter, the Council may take decisions only on matters clearly identified for decision on the agenda. If agreed by the Chairman, any urgent items not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made, at that meeting.
- 4.9 The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be one-third of the whole number of Councillors, subject to a minimum of 3 Councillors. If there be insufficient members present then no business shall be transacted and a fresh notice shall be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.
- 4.10 If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting shall be adjourned and any further business carried forward to the meeting when next convened.
- 4.11 Business on the agenda shall normally be moved by the Chairman without the need for a formal proposer and seconder. Any Councillor with a dissenting view shall be allowed reasonable time to be heard and for that view to be discussed. Any Councillor may at any time make a proposal for consideration and discussion. Voting on all matters shall be by a show of hands. Any Councillor may request that the Clerk records his vote in the minutes, or how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature shall be made before moving on to the next business.
- 4.12 In cases of equal votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote. He is not obliged to cast his vote in the same direction as he voted originally.

4.13 Minutes of Council Meetings shall be kept by the Clerk or, in his absence, another person. The minutes which are circulated shall be in draft until they are approved by the Parish Council at their next meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4.14 If a Councillor has a personal interest in a particular planning application, he may make a statement to the meeting but then the Councillor shall, if required by the Chairman, leave the meeting while discussions take place. In any event, that Councillor may not vote.

## **5. The Parish Clerk**

5.1 The Parish Clerk ('the Clerk') is the Council's 'Proper Officer' – in effect, the executive arm of the Council, responsible for putting the Council's decisions into effect.

5.2 The Clerk is also the 'Responsible Financial Officer', responsible for managing the financial affairs of the Council.

5.3 Unless the duties of the Clerk are carried out by a Councillor, he shall be an employee of the Council and have the benefits of employment prescribed by law. He shall be issued with an employment contract which will include the main elements of his duties and responsibilities. The Clerk shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, undertake relevant training in his duties, and will be expected to undertake his duties in accordance with that training, notwithstanding that the details may not be listed in his employment contract. His line manager shall be the Chairman of the Parish Council.

5.4 By virtue of his training referred to above in paragraph 5.3, the Parish Clerk acts as adviser to the Chairman and to the Council as a whole. This advice includes practice and procedure, as well as the application of relevant law.

## **6. Policies**

6.1 The Parish Council shall review its operations and risks at least once a year, and ensure that it has the necessary policies and procedures in place for the correct performance of its operations and the control of its risks.

6.2 In particular, the Clerk shall undertake a risk assessment annually of all the activities of the Council, and submit a report for approval by the Council. This assessment shall also cover the appropriateness of the internal audit arrangements.

6.3 If the Council undertakes a new activity not covered by the existing risk assessment an assessment shall be undertaken before the activity commences.

## 7. Code of Conduct, Disclosable Interests and Dispensations

- 7.1 All Councillors shall observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which shall be supplied to him when he first becomes a Councillor.
- 7.2 Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a Councillor may not speak and may not vote when the Council is considering a matter in which he has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012). He shall, *[if the Chairman so directs,]*<sup>1</sup>leave the meeting during the discussion.
- 7.3 When the Council is considering a matter in which a Councillor has a Local **Non**-Pecuniary Interest, the Chairman shall determine whether that Councillor shall withdraw from the meeting for the discussion, or whether he may remain but not speak, or whether he may speak but not vote, or whether he may speak and vote.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Chairman under advice from the Clerk OR by a meeting of the Council for which the dispensation is required. That decision is final.
- 7.6 A dispensation request shall state:
- the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - the date of the meeting and the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- 7.7 A dispensation may be granted if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:
- 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;
  - granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
  - it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

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<sup>1</sup> This insertion is for discussion. Should the chairman be put in a potentially awkward position of having to decide whether to exclude the councillor (eg for a planning application in which he has an interest), or would it be better to take it out of the chairman's hands altogether? Perhaps the better solution would be to say: '*...unless the Council unanimously decides otherwise...*'

## **8. Insurance**

- 8.1 Following the annual review of the risk assessment the Council shall review the level of insurance cover and ensure that it is adequate and appropriate for the Council's purposes. Minimum cover shall include Public Liability, Employers Liability, Money and Fidelity Guarantee.

## **9. Freedom of Information**

- 9.1 As a public body, the Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and embraces the Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. The Clerk shall ensure that the Council conforms to the requirements of the FOI Act allowing public access to appropriate information.

## **10. Committees and Working Groups**

- 10.1 There are no standing committees. From time to time, however, the Council may set up working groups to investigate, advise and recommend concerning a particular matter. Any such working group shall be limited to its terms of reference and by time, and shall have no authority to make Council decisions.
- 10.2 Where the Council has tasked a working group or individual Councillor with a project then that working group or Councillor shall, subject to any limits set by the Council, proceed with that project, making any decisions and concluding any subsidiary agreements (through the Clerk) necessary to achieve its ends. Progress on the project, including any such decisions or agreements, shall be reported to the Council at its next meeting.

## **11. Emergency Business**

- 11.1 Should it not be possible to convene an extraordinary meeting (for example, where the required notice period is not available) then any emergency business shall be handled by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor. Actions shall be reported promptly to the Council.

## **12. Alteration or Reversal of previous decisions**

- 12.1 Decisions of the Council shall not normally be reversed within 4 months, except where a special item is placed on the agenda bearing the name of two Councillors, and is considered and approved by the Council.

## **13. Accounting Matters**

- 13.1 The term 'proper practices' in these Standing Orders refers to the current version of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide'. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 13.2 The Council's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. After each quarter-end the Responsible Financial Officer shall make available to the next Council meeting a statement summarising:

- income and expenditure for that quarter;

- aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;
- the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported, and
- a comparison of projected actuals against budget for the full year, highlighting variances.

13.3 After the financial year-end the Responsible Financial Officer shall prepare and submit to the Council the Annual Governance and Accountability Return ('the AGAR'), in accordance with proper practices. The AGAR, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council so that it may be considered for adoption before 30 June. A copy of the AGAR shall be sent to all Councillors at least 14 days before the meeting at which it will be considered.

#### **14. Financial Controls and Regulation**

14.1 The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for drawing up and maintaining Financial Regulations which comply with best practice, current law and proper practices (as defined). The Financial Regulations shall be presented to the Council for consideration and approval, and kept under regular review. They shall cover procedures appropriate to the Council's size, legal obligations and financial resources for prudent management of the Council's finances, including authorities, systems for compliance with the law and best practice, for budgetary controls, for audit compliance, and for managing financial and other risks and preventing fraud and other malpractices.

#### **15 Legal Deeds**

**15.1 A legal deed may only be executed and delivered on behalf of the Council if authorised by a resolution of the Council.**

**15.2 As the Council has no corporate seal, any two Councillors may sign any authorised deed.**

#### **16 Standing Orders generally**

16.1 These Standing Orders shall be reviewed annually by the Clerk and the Chairman, and any proposed amendments shall be considered by the Council. If at any time it becomes apparent to the Chairman that any relevant matter or procedure is not covered adequately by these Standing Orders, the matter will be resolved in accordance with the current Model Standard Orders issued by the National Association of Local Councils which are hereby incorporated by reference to the extent that they do not conflict with these Standing Orders.

16.2 If during a Council meeting a question arises as to the interpretation of these Standing Orders, the Chairman, advised by the Clerk, shall make a determination. Subsequently, the advice of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils should be sought.

16.3 The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision shall be included in the minutes. The suspension shall not be made lightly and it shall be time-limited.

These Standing Orders were adopted by the Council at its meeting on .....date

# COMBS PARISH COUNCIL (2019)

## FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

*Draft 5<sup>th</sup> April*

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*this table will be subject to adjustment*

## 1 General

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' means the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified. The term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' refers to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG)<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.6. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.7. The Parish Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer ('RFO') and is accordingly responsible for administering and managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices and these Regulations.
- 1.8. The RFO
  - acts under the direction of the Council;
  - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

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<sup>2</sup> Available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.9 The accounting records shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances or any other financial management information prepared for the Council from time to time complies with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.10 The accounting records shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.11 The accounting control systems shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.12 The Council shall not delegate any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council tax requirement);
  - approving accounting statements;
  - approving the Annual Governance Statement;
  - borrowing;
  - writing off bad debts;
  - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
  - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors.
- 1.13 In addition the Council must:
- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts; and
  - approve any and all expenditure.

## **2 Financial Year and Annual Budget**

- 2.1 The Council's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- 2.2 The RFO shall prepare a draft budget to finance the Council's plans and operations for the forthcoming year and submit such draft budget to the November Council meeting. The council shall determine the precept (council tax requirement) to be levied for the ensuing financial year by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 2.3 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### **3 Budgetary Control**

- 3.1 Other than emergency situations envisaged elsewhere in these Financial Regulations, no expenditure may be incurred without the approval of the Council.
- 3.2 During the financial year the Council may, by specific resolution, approve the reallocation of unspent and available amounts between budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate. Expenditure above the overall budgeted figure shall not be exceeded except in exceptional circumstances
- 3.3 The RFO may incur expenditure which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £200. The RFO shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5 Unspent provisions in the budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the Council.

### **4 Reporting**

- 4.1 After each quarter-end the RFO shall present to the next Council meeting a statement summarising:
  - income and expenditure for that quarter;

- aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;
- the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported, and
- a comparison with the budget for the financial year, highlighting actual and potential variances.

4.2 After the financial year-end the RFO shall prepare and submit to the Council the Annual Governance and Accountability Return ('the AGAR'), in accordance with proper practices. The AGAR, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council so that it may be approved and adopted before 30<sup>th</sup> June. A copy of the AGAR shall be sent to all Councillors at least 14 days before the meeting at which it will be considered.

## **5 Accounting and Audit (Internal and External)**

5.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.

5.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council.

5.3 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

5.4 The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or Councillor shall make available such documents and records as are deemed to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as are considered necessary for that purpose.

5.5 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.

5.6 The internal auditor shall:

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

5.7 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;

- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
  - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 5.8 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 5.9 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 5.10 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

## **6. Banking Arrangements and Payment of Accounts**

- 6.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. They shall be reviewed annually for efficiency and effectiveness. All instructions to the bank for payment of monies shall require signature by two authorised Councillors.
- 6.2 The RFO shall hold no cash float on behalf of the Council. If the RFO receives any Council income in cash it shall be paid directly into the Council's bank account.
- 6.3 All payments shall be made by cheque, standing order or direct debit.
- 6.4 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy himself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received or carried out as required, and the invoice is payable.
- 6.5 The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetic and other accuracy and shall allocate them to the appropriate expenditure heading. All invoices shall be listed on the agenda for the next Council Meeting and submitted for settlement. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6 If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge of interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting

of Council, the RFO and two authorised signatories may take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that these payments shall be reported to the next Council Meeting.

## **7. Payment of Salaries**

7.1 The Clerk is the Council's only employee. As his employer, the Council shall comply with all PAYE and National Insurance laws and regulations.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance, pension contributions, shall be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in the employment contract, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.

7.3 No changes shall be made to the employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council.

7.4 Each and every payment of net salary to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- by any Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- by the internal auditor;
- by the external auditor; or
- by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

7.5 The Chairman, as the Clerk's line manager, shall maintain an effective system to monitor the Clerk's performance.

## **8 Loans and Investment**

8.1 The Council has made no loans or investments, neither does it anticipate doing so in the foreseeable future. Should that situation change at any time, the Council shall consider what procedures and regulations should be put in place and incorporated into these Financial Regulations; failing which the procedures contained in the NALC Model Financial Regulations then in force shall be adopted.

8.2 The Council has no borrowings, neither does it anticipate the need to borrow in the foreseeable future. Should that situation change at any time, the Council shall consider what procedures and regulations should be put in place and incorporated into these Financial Regulations, failing which the procedures contained in the NALC Model Financial Regulations then in force shall be adopted.

## **9. Income**

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of the RFO.
- 9.2 The Council will review annually all standard fees and charges (in respect of, for example, the cemetery), following a report of the Clerk/RFO.
- 9.3 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.4 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact by the RFO.
- 9.5 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in-slip.
- 9.6 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.7 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually.

## **10. Procurement**

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services to be procured unless it is a project or major contract for which a bespoke contract is to be negotiated. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.3 Having regard to the value of the procurement and all other circumstances, the Council shall consider whether obtaining more than one quote or estimate is appropriate, feasible or reasonable. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate
- 10.4 No Councillor may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council; only the Clerk is authorised to do that.
- 10.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the

statutory authority is reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

- 10.6 If the Council resolves at any time to procure a project or other major contract (for example, significant construction work), it shall consider the following (as a minimum):
- Whether the Council has the requisite professional skills to hand a) to write an Invitation to Tender, b) to assess the tenders consequently received, and c) to manage the project to completion; and
  - Whether the project will be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (ie having at present values an estimated contract value of £25,000 or more).
- 10.7 In the case of a project or major contract, the Council shall consider and put in place appropriate procedures for payments (including stage payments, final payments and retention sums); failing which, they shall adopt the relevant provisions of the NALC Model Financial Regulations then in force.

## **11. Assets, Properties and Estates**

- 11.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 11.2 No tangible moveable property over the value of £250 shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.
- 11.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case which shall include an appropriate level of consultation with the electorate.
- 11.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case which shall include an appropriate level of consultation with the electorate.
- 11.5 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually; it is recommended that such verification is combined with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## **12. Insurance**

- 12.1 Following the annual risk assessment the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 12.2 The Clerk/RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 12.3 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 12.4 All Councillors and the Clerk/RFO shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.

### **13. Risk Management**

- 13.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that all risks to the Council are assessed thoroughly and managed effectively. Each year, at a time to be determined by the Council, the Clerk/RFO shall prepare and submit to the Council a review of all risks, the Risk Assessment and the appropriateness of the Risk Management Policy.
- 13.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft Risk Assessment including proposals to manage its risks for consideration by the Council.

### **14. Revision of Financial Regulations**

- 14.1 At least once a year, prior to approving the annual return, the Council shall review these Financial Regulations and the effectiveness of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. The clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on [.....]

## Combs Parish Council Asset Register

For the year ending 31 March 2019

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Value</b>
a. Assets purchased	£ 1390.00
b. Assets disposed of	£ 0.00
c. At 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 assets held:	
i. Bus Shelter	£ 4,782.15
ii. Street Lamp Fixtures	£ 545.39
iii. Noticeboards x 5	£ 1,200.80
iv. Village Sign	£ 573.73
v. Cemetery Land at cost	£ 11,989.00
vi. Cemetery Gates	£ 550.00
vii. Cemetery Seat	£ 250.00
viii. Fireproof Filing Cabinet	£ 405.00
ix. Benches x 5	£ 1,171.00
x. Dog Waste Bins x 11	£ 1,756.74
xi. Litter bin	£ 100.38
xii. Laptop	£ 333.34
xiii. Defibrillator and Cabinet x 2	£ 3,240.00
xiv. Printer/scanner	£ 166.00
xv. Beacon	£1,390.00

**Total** **£ 28,453.93**

The basis of valuation of these assets is historic

Long Term Investments 2 ½% consolidated stock £ 20.68

**£ 27,474.61**

Section 137 payments £ 2465.58

Combs Parish Council has no borrowings, debts outstanding, tenancies, pensions and has not undertaken any agency work, advertising or publicity

Signed Chairman

Responsible Financial Officer

.....

.....

Date:

Date:

.....

.....

## COMBS PARISH COUNCIL

### INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020

#### 1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

The council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

#### 2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

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

#### 3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

##### **The Council:**

The council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its April or May meeting. The January meeting of the council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

A Councillor is appointed to have responsibility for bank reconciliation checks.

The full council meets 11 or 12 times each year and monitors progress against its aims and objectives at each meeting by receiving relevant reports from the parish clerk.

The council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures. See attached Report.

##### **Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:**

The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

##### **Payments:**

All payments are reported to the council for approval. Two members of the council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil. All authorised cheque signatories are members of the Council. Where delegation permits, as per s.101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act of 1972 and the Council's Financial Regulations, a report will be provided to the next full Council.

**Income:**

All income is received and banked in the council’s name in a timely manner and reported to the council.

**Risk Assessments/Risk Management:**

The council reviews its risk assessment annually in April or May, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

**Internal Audit:**

The council appoints an independent and competent internal auditor who reports to the council on an annual basis on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk management

**External Audit:**

The council’s size renders an external audit unnecessary and inappropriate

**4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement of Internal Control.

-----  
Chairman

-----  
RFO/Clerk

Approved and adopted by [Name of] Town/Parish Council)

Meeting date:

## INTERNAL CONTROL REPORT

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 aims to strengthen governance and accountability through requirements related to internal control and internal audit.

Whilst the Parish Council has reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit (independence, competence, proportionate and scope), it has a requirement levied on it to ensure that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control:-

‘The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based i.e. level of control and management must be appropriate to the risk involved. The Council must determine the most appropriate method of internal control....care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO’s day to day management of financial affairs.’

As part of its internal control, the Parish Council has appointed a non-signatory Councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control via the following tests on a quarterly basis with a written report of any findings to be submitted to the Council and minuted as received.

CONTROL TEST	TEST DONE	COMMENTS – check documents and initial
	Yes or No	
Ensuring an up to date Register of Assets		
Regular maintenance arrangement for physical assets		
Annual review of risk and the adequacy of Insurance cover		
Annual review of financial risk		
Awareness of Standing Orders and Financial regulations		
Adoption of Financial and Standing Orders		
Regular reporting on performance by contractors		
Annual review of contracts (where appropriate)		
Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed		
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure		
Recording in the minutes or appendices of the minutes the precise powers under		

which expenditure is being approved		
Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted		
Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked		
Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook agrees to District Council notification		
Contracts of employment for staff Contract annually reviewed Updating records to record changes in relevant legislation PAYE/NIC properly operated by the Council as an employer		
VAT correctly accounted for VAT payments identified, recorded and reclaimed in the cashbook		
Regular financial reporting to Parish Council		
Regular budget monitoring statements as reported to Parish Council		
Compliance with 2014 Regulations: Officer Decision Reports		
Compliance with Local Transparency Code Of 2014: Items of expenditure incurred over £500		
Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy kept in for safekeeping		
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members' Interests and Gifts of Hospitality		
Adoption of Codes of Conduct for Members		
Declaration of Acceptance of Office		

Date of review of system of Internal Controls.....

Review of system of Internal Controls carried out by:

Name.....Signature.....

Report submitted to Council (date).....

(minute reference).....

Next review of system of Internal Controls due.....

Additional comments by reviewer:

**Combs Parish Council**

**Risk Assessment and Financial Management for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020**

Topic		Risk Identified	Risk Level H/M/ L	Management of Risk	Staff Action
1.	Precept	Not submitted	L	Full minute – The Clerk/RFO notes the submission date and informs the Parish Councillors	Diary
		Not paid by DC	L	Confirm receipt. An email confirming BACS payment is received from MSDC that confirms when the payment will be/has been made.	Diary
		Adequacy of precept	H	Quarterly review of budget too actual. Budgets are set ahead of deciding what level of precept to request and appears as agenda items. The clerk updates the Parish Council meeting on budget too actual. The clerk ratifies the bank statement with payments made and receipts received.	Diary
2.	Cemetery	Payment	M	Cheque fees for burials/memorials checked against fee schedule for burials/memorials, clerk updates receipt on the finance spreadsheet and adds as a receipt to the agenda which is reported to the Parish Council at each meeting	Member to verify
		Administration	M	Clerk updates burial records each time they are notified of a new burial/memorial	Member to verify
3.	Grants District	Claims Procedure	M	The clerk always follows the correct procedure for grant applications and all receipts are recorded in the agenda and minutes at the Parish Council Meetings	Diary
		Receipt of grant when due	M		
4.	Salaries	Wrong salary/hours/rate paid	M	The clerk is the only employee at Combs Parish Council and is paid her monthly set salary for 5 hours a week directly by standing order. The clerk is responsible for	Member to verify
		Wrong deductions –	M		Member to verify

		NI and Income Tax		calculating (through the HM Revenue & Customs PAYE tools) her own salary/overtime/expenses/tax which has a preliminary check by a designated councillor and then by the parish council prior to payment and signed off at the Parish Council Meetings. The clerk is not self-employed.	
5.	Direct Costs and overhead expenses	Goods not supplied to Council	M	The clerk checks all invoices and delivery notes before submitting for payment and only pays for items that have been received, unless payments are required in advance e.g. pro-forma invoice which has been previously agreed at a Parish Council Meeting. All purchased items are added to the asset register which is checked annually.	Approval check
		Invoice incorrectly calculated or recorded	L	Arithmetic is checked on invoices and bank reconciliations are performed on a monthly basis when the monthly bank statement is received.	Member to verify
		Cheque payable is excessive or to wrong party	M	Payments are only made to the person/company named on the invoice. All invoices are considered for payment at a Parish Council meeting. Cheques are signed by two signatories, stubs and invoices initialled and dated and recorded in the payments and receipts ledger.	Approval check
6.	Grants & Support	No power to pay or no evidence of agreement of Council to pay	M	The power to pay is always checked before payments is made. All grants are considered at a full Parish Council Meeting and conditions agreed if appropriate e.g. requests for further information for clarity. All payments are agreed and cheques written and signed during each Parish Council Meeting. The clerk updates financial records accordingly.	Member verify
		Conditions agreed	L		RFO Check
7.	Election Costs	Invoice at agreed rate	L	The clerk notes estimated election costs during an election year and budgets appropriately. The Parish Council ensure there are sufficient funds in the reserve account.	RFO verify

8.	VAT	VAT Analysis	M	The clerk keeps a register of all VAT paid	RFO verify
		Charged on sales	M	The council is not VAT registered as they do not conduct sales	RFO verify
		Charged on purchases	L	All VAT invoices are filed accordingly and VAT paid recorded accordingly for VAT claim to be carried out.	RFO verify
		Claimed within time limits	M	Clerk submits VAT reclaims within time limit in accordance with HM Revenue & Customs regulations.	RFO verify
9.	Reserves - General	Adequacy	L	The reserve account is monitored at each Parish Council Meeting and considered at the annual budget meeting. Clerk keeps a financial record of all transactions and receives a monthly bank statement.	RFO opinion/member view, 3 year plan
	Reserves - Earmarked	Adequacy	L	The earmarked reserves are considered at the annual budget setting, regularly at the parish council meetings and when the annual account review is carried out.	RFO opinion/member view
	Reserves - Earmarked	Unidentified Earmarked or Contingent liability	L	This is reviewed as necessary throughout the year and minuted as appropriate	RFO/member view
10.	Assets	Loss, Damage etc.	M	Assets are reviewed annually – an annual inspection is carried out on assets and insurance and asset registers are updated	Diary
		Risk or damage to third party property or individuals	M	The adequacy of the parish council's public liability insurance is reviewed annually.	Diary
11.	Staff	Loss of key personnel (clerk)	L	The clerk is the only employee. Communications are good which ensures that stress is minimal and training is provided when needed. Hours, health, stress, training, long term sick, early departure – risk is monitored and managed as appropriate.	RFO/member view
		Fraud by staff	L	Fidelity Guarantee value appropriately set	Council to review annually
12.	Loss	Consequential loss due to critical damage or third party	L	Insurance cover is reviewed and renewed annually.	Diary

		performance			
13	Cash	Cash handling	L	No cash is kept by the parish council – all financial transactions are processed with cheques. Regular bank reconciliations are carried out within an excel spreadsheet and statements checked. Bank balances and a financial spreadsheet are circulated via email to Combs Parish Council prior to parish council meetings and bank balances are also included in the minutes of the meeting.	Annual review of controls and member to verify reconciliations taking place.
.		Cash banking	L		
14	Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payment	H	Parish Councillors attend training when relevant. The clerk has received clerk's training but needs to be aware of changes. The clerk regularly researches or asks SALC for advice on Parish Council powers.	Diary
15	Financial Records	Inadequate records	L	The clerk keeps account records which are updated before and after each Parish Council Meeting and on receipt of the monthly bank statement. Accounts are inspected by Internal and External Auditors annually and records are always available.	Diary
16	Minutes	Accurate and legal	L	Minutes are always reviewed and approved at the following Parish Council Meeting to which they refer. Approval of minutes are a permanent agenda item.	Diary
17	Members Interests	Conflict of interest	M	These are reviewed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting and members are asked for their declaration of interests at each Parish Council Meeting and these are documented/minuted and any conflict is addressed appropriately.	Diary
18	Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities loss of interest or performance	M	Annual maintenance inspection and review.	Diary

**Signed:** .....Chairman

**Date:** .....

*(signed document is with Parish Clerk)*

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2018/19 for

COMBS PARISH COUNCIL AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2018 £	31 March 2019 £	
1. Balances brought forward	15,685	7646	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	6850	7250	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	5100	11,209	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	3275	3058	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	10,714	9450	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	7646	13,597	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	7646	13,597	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	27,084	28,474	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2019 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.  
Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

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

DD/MM/YY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

## ***Draft Charitable Donations Policy***

Combs Parish Council receives many requests for donations throughout the year from charities and other organizations, most of which are worthy causes. However, the Council obtains its funds for the purposes of its operations for the benefit of the parish and the residents, and not for 'worthy causes'.

On the other hand, many of those organizations do provide some form of benefit to the parish residents as part of the wider community of Suffolk or even East Anglia, for example providing a volunteer emergency or safety-net service whether in medicine (eg Suffolk Accident Rescue Service/EA Air Ambulance), legal advice (eg CAB), planning support (Suffolk Preservation Society) or other matters.

In deciding how to respond to these requests for donations, therefore, the Council should consider the following matters:

1. How local is the organization? Does it service only Combs, or Combs and one or two adjoining parishes?
2. Is the request merely for donations to its general funds, or is there a specific object in mind which would clearly have some benefit to the residents of Combs?
3. Is the organization known to have benefitted Combs residents in the recent past or is it likely to benefit them in the future? Is such benefit widespread in Combs, or only on very rare occasions and to very few people?
4. Is the organization well run financially (as far as can be ascertained), such that the funds donated are unlikely to be squandered? Or is the request for donations known or suspected to be an attempt to save it from impending collapse? Is the organization well funded already, and the request is only a general circular, part of its regular annual campaign?
5. How recent was the last request for donations, and how recently did the Council donate?
6. Is there another organization which does a similar job without recourse to this kind of funding, or is there an organization to which we should belong and pay a verifiable subscription?

There should be a line item in the Council's budget for Charitable Donations, and the sum should not be greater than £[500?]. Only in very exceptional circumstances should this budget figure be exceeded in any financial year, even if the projections for the full year indicate a surplus. Any underspend from this sum should not be carried forward to the next year except where a commitment has been made but has not yet been drawn down.

This policy was adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on .....date.

## **Speeding and SIDs – Report**

In a letter dated April 2019 two residents of Combs, living in houses right on Scotches Corner, expressed their concern at the excessive speed with which some vehicles approach Scotches Corner from Poplar Hill, and proceed down Tannery Road. Their concern is that, unless something is done about it, before long someone will be killed. They note that there have been several relatively minor accidents in recent years, and one more serious accident last year.

The authors of the letter also point out that lorries ‘have misjudged the junction at speed’, crashing into a domestic hedge before returning to the road, and hitting other objects like road signs and concrete water hydrant posts.

They also point out that many 30mph signs are in serious need of refurbishment.

### **Road signs**

Taking the latter point first, the parish council has asked the county Highways Department [on several occasions] to refurbish our defective 30mph signs but so far without success. Some signs are simply dirty and a working party is to be arranged to clean them, however in quite a few cases the numbers have faded away. County Councillor Kay Oakes has offered to look into obtaining replacement stickers to address this.

While it is acknowledged that many of our speed restrictions signs should be refurbished, it is thought that speeding occurs not because those drivers don’t know that there is a 30mph limit but because they don’t care. So, while it may be important to make it unavoidably plain to all motorists that it is a speed restricted area, it is not anticipated that many of them will suddenly develop better driving habits and obey the refurbished signs.

### **Speeding**

The first two points in the letter referred to above are essentially about speeding through the village. The Council is in the advanced stages of procuring an SID, to be positioned around the village in 7 sites along Park Road, Bildeston Road and Tannery Road.

Although it is hoped that most drivers who exceed the speed limit will respond positively to the SID wherever it may be, it is anticipated that some will continue to ignore the known restrictions or, in a few cases, may seek thrill from getting the speed warning on the SID as high as they can.

The SID we are intending to procure has a number of capabilities, two of which are:

- capturing (anonymous) speed data, and
- limiting the actual speed of a vehicle shown on the display.

The latter feature will restrict those irresponsible drivers who may go fast to achieve a high speed readout, while the former feature will allow us to collect real data over a given period. This data will be anonymous, not only because the SID does not record number plates or similar, but also because the parish council is neither permitted nor does it wish to enforce speed limits, its wish is merely to calm the traffic generally.

### **Enforcement**

Should the data captured by the SID indicate that there is a material speeding problem (there do not appear to be any hard and fast criteria for that, merely a matter of judgement) in any particular location, then we would be able to approach Suffolk Police (Stowmarket Neighbourhood Team or Norfolk & Suffolk Safecam Community Enforcement Team) with that data and seek Enforcement action (details available on 'Working Together to Reduce Speeding' website).

### **Location**

The concern raised by the residents is in the vicinity of Scotches Corner and down Tannery Road. Siting of the SID is difficult in this area principally because of the lack of safe parking and working space to service the SID. The two locations approved by (in fact, suggested by) SCC Highways Dept are at the existing posts just outside Dennys Farmhouse and the Tannery. The first gives a sweep of something like 70 yards observing vehicles coming down from Scotches Corner, and the second a sweep of some 70 to 100 yards for vehicles going in both directions.

The most likely place for a Safecam to be sited by the Enforcement people, should it come to that and should we be lucky enough to secure their agreement, would seem to be where Webbs Close joins Tannery Road. There seems no prospect of any Enforcement cameras being located within sight of Scotches Corner itself, meaning that lorries who misjudge their speed and turning capabilities are, sadly, unlikely to be subject to Enforcement.