



1825-2025

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Mr Gavin Taylor  
Planning  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
The Grange  
Nutholt Lane  
Ely  
CB7 4EE

28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Gavin,

**RE: 25/00639/FUM – Erection of a battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure at land southwest of Hightown Drive, Burwell**

I hope this letter finds you well.

Following the deferral of this application at Planning Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026, I am writing to confirm the additional information that is being submitted to address Members concerns and what it supersedes.

Document	Supersedes	Comments
Site Layout Plan (drawing no. 3 Rev 8)	Site Layout Plan (drawing no. 3 Rev 7)	Layout reconfigured to move battery units further away from overhead power lines and associated infrastructure eg substation closer to Hightown Drive.
Greenergy Post Committee Responses	N/A	Comprehensive response to the queries raised at Planning Committee
Fire Strategy Plan (drawing no. 16 Rev 2)	Fire Strategy Plan (drawing no. 16)	Amended to reflect changes to site layout.
Fire Risk Management Plan (10607566-RMC-IE-01, Rev. 0)	N/A	The Risk Management Plan has been prepared by a fire safety specialist and accords with the required standards, regulations and industry best practice.
Fire Risk Emergency Response Plan (10607566-RMC-IE-02, Rev. 0)	N/A	The Emergency Response Plan outlines measures to facilitate effective and safe emergency response with regard to fire. Both this document and the above are considered to comprise sufficient information which addresses that requested in proposed Condition 11 of the previously written Committee Report. Condition 11 could therefore be reworded as follows: <i>"The Fire Risk Emergency Response Plan (10607566-RMC-IE-02, Rev. 0) and Fire Risk Management Plan (10607566-RMC-IE-01, Rev. 0)</i>

		<i>hereby approved shall be implemented prior to the first operational use of the development and the operation of the site shall not take place other than in full accordance with them during the lifetime of the development.</i> "The reworded condition is considered more appropriate given the current wording is not considered to be enforceable or precise, with a specific regard to the last paragraph as currently drafted.
<b>Indicative Landscape Masterplan (Rev A)</b>	Indicative Landscape Masterplan (Rev 000)	Amended to reflect changes to site layout and include further proposed planting on western boundary, therefore providing further screening.
<b>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Enhancement Scheme (CIC v1.4)</b>	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Enhancement Scheme (CIC v1.3)	Appendix A amended to show amended Indicative Landscape Masterplan.
<b>BNG Metric (v1.1)</b>	BNG Metric (v1.0)	On-site post intervention map amended to reflect new layout.
<b>Transport Assessment (Rev C) inc. General Arrangement Drawings Sheets 1-8 (drawing no. 211208-04)</b>	Transport Assessment (Rev B); General Arrangement Drawings Sheets 1-8 (drawing no. 211208-03)	Figure 4.1 and Appendix A amended to show revised site layout. Appendix B and previously submitted separate General Arrangement drawings replaced and collated into same document, to reflect revised layout.
<b>Archaeological Desk Based Assessment v2</b>	Archaeological Desk Based Assessment v1	Appendix amended to show new site layout drawing.
<b>Noise Impact Assessment (51-705-R1-4)</b>	Noise Impact Assessment (51-705-R1-2)	Figures 1 and 2 and Appendix IV amended to show revised site layout.
<b>Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (v2)</b>	Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (v1)	Appendix A amended to show new site layout, as well as Proposed Drainage Layout (drawing no. FRDA-005 Rev 1).
<b>Firewater Management Plan (Rev 2)</b>	Firewater Management Plan (v1)	Firewater Management Overview Plan (drawing no. FWMP-001-Rev 1) amended to reflect revised site layout.

I trust the above is clear but if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Toni Hylton*

Senior Planner

[Toni.hylton@cheffins.co.uk](mailto:Toni.hylton@cheffins.co.uk)

01223 869649

For and on behalf of Cheffins

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [Burwell energy awareness team BEAT](#); [Julia Rogers](#); [Katherine Hyett](#)  
**Subject:** Re: GREENERGY  
**Date:** 30 January 2026 22:00:25

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CAUTION: This email originates from outside of Burwell Parish Council  
I absolutely agree. The differences are such that the original application should be refused.

Best,

Nick

[REDACTED]

Hi Nick

My personal view and one I will be responding to ECDC with is

Those are not “minor” amendments, especially at the stage of a deferral for refusal.

Repositioning batteries that then changes noise, traffic, and fire safety impacts gives a very solid procedural and planning objection

The fact this has been accepted is concerning.

Interested to hear other views

Best Wishes

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nick Acklam <n.acklam@reachparishcouncil.org>

**Sent:** Friday, January 30, 2026 20:02

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** GREENERGY

Dear All,

This is a belt and braces email!

I wanted to ensure that you were in receipt of the attached.

I shall ensure that it is discussed at next Tuesday's Reach PC meeting. First of all I would question why Grenergy gets two bites at the cherry. This is not something that would be granted to the great majority of planning applicants. Grenergy had

ample time to address our concerns prior to the Planning Committee. Secondly it does address many of my and Reach PC's objections. I would welcome your views especially on the noise intrusion and the viability of the safety plan.

Best,

Nick

**From:** [REDACTED] [gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.uk)  
**Subject:** Fwd: 25/00639/FUM  
**Date:** 31 January 2026 08:15:57  
**Attachments:** [14949 M001 BESS facility, Burwell - Review of NIA.pdf](#)  
[2026.01.22 Survey Positions v1 revised 1.docx](#)

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CAUTION: This email originates from outside of Burwell Parish Council

**Subject: 25/00639/FUM**

Dear Gavin Taylor,

We, along with other concerned residents, are reviewing the Noise Impact Report from Grenergy related to High Town Drove. Attached is a professional noise review we and our neighbours have commissioned of the NIA for your reference. I also attach photos showing more than one residential property that could be affected by noise, including Woodside Meadows Park, all appear to be overlooked by Grenergy as they mention only one property affected, since the amended plan shows the batteries moved closer to residential properties we respectfully ask you consider the attached noise review information.

The AJA survey positions are also attached although the google plan photo is not updated with the new Woodside Meadows park, with capacity for 96 homes.

We are currently awaiting the completion of two additional noise assessment items before the next planning decision is made, which we will forward to you for your consideration once available.

Items Under Review:

1. Initial Review

A review of the submitted information and a statement of AJA comments (attached).

2. Additional Noise Survey:

This includes Item 1 plus a new noise survey to measure baseline noise levels over a longer period, much closer to the nearest sensitive receptors (NSRs). The report will detail the methodology and results of the survey, along with our comments on the submitted Noise Impact Assessment (NIA). This will be based on four different noise monitoring locations.

3. Comprehensive Noise Assessment:

- This includes Items 1 and 2, plus additional calculations and noise modelling to assess the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). This reassessment will rely on information provided in the application and any technical data from the equipment manufacturers. We will provide a report detailing the methodology, results, and our comments regarding the submitted NIA.

Key Concerns:

Grenergy's NIA lists only one property as affected, which we believe is incorrect. Many more properties along Wiers Drove and Burwell Road will be impacted by noise. See photos attached.

We anticipate that the new BESS will be larger than the one on Wiers Drove, and there are many unhappy neighbours that we know who complain due to the noise impact near that installation.

Given its proximity to residential properties, and the newly amended closer location of the batteries to residents, we expect the noise from the new BESS to be more pronounced. It's our experience that noise carries further across the flat fen, we can hear the donkeys ee-orr from Great Lane in Reach as if they are in the field next door as well as the cows from the farm further along Great Lane at least 1 km away!

Grenergy states, "The noise emitted from the cooling fans in the inverters is known to be 65dB at 1m, which is roughly equivalent to a **normal conversation or a quiet library**." However, we feel that they have underestimated the local noise impact.

Our AJA-recommended reassessment of the potential noise impact of the BESS 2 and 3 will be available in the next few weeks for your consideration and comparison.

Limitations Identified in the AJA Noise Assessment:

1. Duration of Survey:

- The baseline survey may not have been conducted long enough to capture noise variability.

2. Location of Measurements:

Measurements may not have been taken at representative locations near the NSRs, potentially missing localized impacts.

3. Weather Conditions:

The assessment might have been conducted under unreliable weather conditions, affecting noise readings.

4. Background Sound Levels:

Background sound levels may not have adhered strictly to BS 4142 and its guidance, leading to potential inaccuracies.

5. Data Reliability:

The overall reliability of the noise modelling results may be compromised due to these factors, raising doubts about the conclusions.

Conclusion:

AJA emphasizes and recommends that these limitations require further investigation to ensure a comprehensive and accurate assessment of noise impacts before any planning decisions are made.

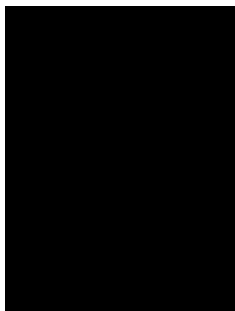
Please see the attached professional Greenergy noise review from AJA.

We along with our neighbours have commissioned and paid for the independent professional baseline noise survey, undertaken at four receptor locations.

Should the application be approved, we would also welcome the baseline noise data and the agreed receptor locations being secured through an appropriate planning condition to provide clarity for future compliance and monitoring and for this survey to be embedded in the conditions as EDC do not appear to do independent noise assessment reports.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kind regards,





# Burwell BESS Noise Assessment: A Critical Review

A Critical Review by AJA of E3P's NIA for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System, revealing flaws that render the conclusion **unreliable**.

**Flawed Survey &  
Data Collection**



**Inadequate Assessment  
& Analysis**

BS 4142





### **Survey Was Too Short (Only 24 Hours)**

Failed to capture typical noise variations across weekdays and weekends.



### **Unrepresentative Measurement Location**

A single, unvalidated position was used instead of measuring near affected homes.



### **Ignored Unsuitable Weather Conditions**

The survey was conducted during heavy rain and high winds, which can invalidate results.



### **Low-Frequency Noise (LFN) Was Not Properly Assessed**

The standard used (BS 4142) explicitly excludes LFN, a key issue for BESS facilities.



### **Background Noise Levels Misrepresented**

Using "median" values ignored quieter periods, skewing the impact assessment results.



### **Final Conclusion Is Unreliable**

Due to multiple errors, the assessment's conclusion of "no adverse impact" cannot be trusted.





<b>Project</b>	14949 Proposed BESS facility, Hightown Drove, Burwell		
<b>Date</b>	26 January 2025	<b>Memo No.</b>	M001
<b>Written by</b>	Gary Percival MIOA	<b>Checked by</b>	Andy Thompson MIOA
<b>Filename</b>	14949 M001 BESS facility, Burwell - Review of NIA		

## PROPOSED BESS FACILITY, HIGHTOWN DROVE, BURWELL REVIEW OF NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 1 INTRODUCTION

We have been instructed by Crown Priory Ltd (CPL) to undertake a review of a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) submitted as part of the planning application for a new BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) facility on land at Hightown Drove in Burwell, Cambridgeshire.

The facility would be approximately 400 m to the south-west of the 400 kV National Grid Burwell Main Substation and approximately 750 m to the west of the 132 kV UK Power Networks (UKPN) Burwell Bulk Power Station. The latter is close to a 49.9 MW BESS facility, with another 39 MW BESS facility close by approved in 2021, so the proposal is not entirely out of context for the area. However, there are existing residential properties nearby so the potential noise impact of the proposed BESS facility must be carefully considered.

The nearest existing residential properties to the proposed BESS facility are approximately 300-500 m away on Burwell Road and 450-750 m away on Weirs Drove (including the gated residential park home development also known as 'Woodside Meadows' on Weirs Drove).

A planning application for the proposed BESS facility was submitted to East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) in June 2025 (ECDC planning reference 25/00639/FUM). A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) carried out and reported by E3P (report reference 51-705) was submitted with the application, and we were asked to review and comment on this report.

Section 1 of the E3P report sets out the objectives of the assessment, which are as follows:

- Establish and measure the existing sound levels across the site, day and night.
- Consider the potential sources of sound associated with the development.
- Compare predicted rating levels with the criterion in accordance with BS 4142.
- Provide advice on mitigation measures, where required.

In principle, this approach is appropriate for this type of assessment.

## 2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Section 2 of the report sets out relevant planning policy, technical methodology and criteria.

The planning policy and planning guidance documents referenced are suitable for this case.

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 *'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'* (BS 4142) is adopted as the assessment methodology. BS 4142 is intended for assessment of noise of a commercial/industrial nature (including mechanical and electrical equipment), so this is appropriate. It is also important to consider that BESS facilities produce low-frequency noise (LFN), typically in the 10 Hz to 200 Hz, that is increasingly recognised as a particular environmental issue for nearby residents. This noise is characterized by a *'hum'* or *'buzz'* primarily caused by transformers and, to a lesser extent, cooling systems. Because LFN has large wavelengths, it can travel further and penetrate buildings more easily than high-frequency sounds, often leading to complaints about sleep disturbance, stress, and, in some cases, physical symptoms. Section 1.3 of the BS 4142 standard specifically states that it is *"...not applicable to the assessment of low frequency noise"* so it may be concluded that the assessment has not appropriately considered the potential impact of LFN from the BESS.

This is discussed further in Section 4.3 of this document in relation to the acoustic *'character corrections'* which were applied as part of the NIA (based on the BS 4142 methodology).

## 3 SURVEY

### 3.1 Measurement duration

According to Section 3.1 of their report, E3P carried out unattended noise monitoring at the site between 11:00 hrs on Wednesday 28 May and 11:00 hrs on Thursday 29 May 2025.

Section 3.1 of the report also states that a 24-hour weekday survey was carried out because, *"Due to the open nature of the site, a long term measurement was not possible."* We would question the reasoning of this – if it was possible to do unattended monitoring over 24 hours even with the open nature of the site, it is unclear why a longer survey was not possible. The survey only being carried out over 24 hours means that the assessment is entirely reliant on that period being typical. It is common to take baseline surveys over longer periods to adequately take account of local variations in traffic/weather, and across both weekdays and weekends so a full and representative picture of the local noise climate is presented.

We would recommend asking for E3P to provide further explanation of why consider this relatively short survey to be adequate.

### 3.2 Measurement position and description of noise climate

Measurements were taken at one position only, on the boundary of the proposed BESS site, because (as stated in Section 3.1) this position was “*considered representative of the closest non-associated residential receptors*”. The reasons why it was considered representative of the nearest dwellings are not explained. The nearest dwellings are between approximately 300-500 m away to the south on Burwell Road and between approximately 450-750 m away to the east/south-east on Weirs Drove. In addition, the community woodland and natural amenity/conservation area known as ‘24 Acres’ is very close to the south-west (within which is a National Trust conservation project, ‘*Reach for Turtle Doves*’, approximately 30-40 m away at its closest point). We might typically expect some attended measurements to be taken at nearby receptors to validate the assumption that the location was suitable, or at least some explanation of why it was considered representative of the nearest receptors.

No details of the main contributory sources of environmental noise at the site are provided, so the existing noise climate cannot be fully understood. The relative relationship between road traffic noise, natural sources and the existing electrical infrastructure is not explained.

### 3.3 Selection of representative levels

The BS 4142 assessment method is based on comparison of sound levels from the specific source (rated for distinctive acoustic characteristics) with the ‘*representative*’ background sound level. In this case, the ‘*median*’ measured background sound levels are used for the assessment. However, there is not obvious justification for this either in BS 4142 standard or in the supporting Association of Noise Consultants (ANC) BS 4142 technical note (2020). Using the median (middle) value in this way will naturally ignore the lower end of measured background sound levels, which we do not consider a robust basis for assessment and does not align with the approach advocated in either the standard or ANC technical note.

### 3.4 Weather conditions

Finally, Section 3.1 of the E3P report also addresses weather conditions during the survey:

*“Weather forecasts were monitored throughout the surveys to ensure no adverse conditions as the location of the Site was not suitable for the installation of an unattended weather station. During the survey, conditions remained dry and wind speeds rarely exceeded 10 mph after Friday.”*

However, local weather records (sourced from [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)) indicate that there were heavy rain showers on the afternoon of 28 May and strong westerly winds (8-10 m/s) during the daytime on 29 May. Wet conditions and wind speeds over 5 m/s are generally not considered suitable for environmental noise measurements and may result in higher than typical measurement results, so the reasoning for the statement in the report is unclear.



## 4 NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 General approach

The general approach to modelling/calculating sound levels from the proposed BESS is set out at the start of Section 4 of the E3P report. This all seems reasonable and appropriate.

### 4.2 Noise data

Section 4 also lists the noise-generating equipment which has been included in the model and assessed. Noise emissions from this equipment are stated by only as single-figure  $L_{pA}$  levels at 1 m. For this type of assessment (of electrical infrastructure) we would typically expect at least octave-band, but ideally 1/3 octave band, data to be used (and reported). The use and reporting of 1/3 octave-band data would enable objective assessment of assessment of tonality (which can be particularly distinctive with electrical equipment) in accordance with BS 4142. 1/3 octave band data may not be available, but this is not stated.

The potential tonality of sound emissions from the BESS has been considered, and a 2 dB character correction applied based on any possible tonality being '*just perceptible*'. It is appropriate for a BESS proposal to assume that there may be some tonality as a worst-case, so this is appropriate. It is also reasonable to assume that any tonality might be '*just perceptible*' based on the calculated specific sound levels being below the background sound levels which have been used. However, if lower background sound levels were used for the assessment (which may be appropriate for the reasons given in Section 3 of this note) then potential tonality is likely to be more perceptible, which may justify a higher correction.

### 4.3 Consideration of low-frequency noise

As explained in Section 2 of this note, it is pragmatic and reasonable to expect the potential impact of LFN generated by the proposed BESS to be considered. This could be accounted for in the BS 4142 character corrections (e.g. using a correction for 'other' characteristics), but ideally should be assessed differently, because Section 1.3 of the BS 4142 standard specifically states that it is "*...not applicable to the assessment of low frequency noise*".

### 4.4 Day/night-time assessment periods

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the E3P report presents the results of the daytime and night-time NIA. At this stage we have not carried out our own modelling/calculations to verify the calculated specific sound levels, but the interpretation of the assessment results appears to be correct based on the calculated sound levels and median background sound levels as presented. If lower background sound levels were used for the assessment (which would be reasonable based on BS 4142 and the ANC technical note) and/or if there was a longer survey and therefore a larger data set from which to determine 'representative background sound levels, then we consider that this would be very likely to result in lower background sound levels for the assessment, which may not significantly change the assessment outcome for the daytime, but could significantly change the outcome at night (because the worst-case results at receptors R1 and R2 are +1 dB above background, and a difference of +5 dB or more over background would indicate an adverse impact according to BS 4142).

## 4.5 Use of BS 8233

The night-time assessment in Section 4.2 also presents an assessment of absolute noise levels against a modified internal noise criterion from BS 8233:2014 'Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings' (BS 8233). This approach is reasonable (particularly considering Subclause 11(1) of BS 4142 which states that *"Where background sound levels and rating levels are low, absolute levels might be as, or more, relevant than the margin by which the rating level exceeds the background. This is especially true at night."*

However, this approach is not always as appropriate when assessing noise from electrical infrastructure due to the potential effects of LFN and/or tonal sound, neither of which are considered when assessing A-weighted average noise levels ( $L_{Aeq}$ ) using BS 8233 criteria.

## 4.6 Consideration of road traffic noise

Section 4.2 of the E3P report also states that noise from the site is likely to be masked by road traffic noise, based on their measured average night-time level of 37 dB  $L_{Aeq,8hour}$ . However, the site is 4 km from the A14 or any other major A roads so this level is likely to be dictated by local traffic and other sources (though this is not stated and it is impossible to know what might have contributed to this level since the main noise sources are not stated). However, 37 dB  $L_{Aeq,8hour}$  suggests very low volumes of road traffic at night, i.e. sporadic vehicles with long periods with no traffic. This is characteristic of quiet rural areas like this. Such sporadic local traffic flow is very unlikely to provide any meaningful acoustic masking.

## 4.7 Review of mitigation measures

Section 4.2 concludes that *"...mitigation measures are not required to control night-time noise levels with no adverse impact predicted."* However, given the uncertainties set out in this report, we consider that there is sufficient doubt over the results of the assessment.

# 5 CONCLUSIONS

- The E3P report concludes (in Section 5) that no adverse impacts are expected. However, as stated above, we consider that there is sufficient doubt over the results of the assessment that this conclusion cannot be entirely relied upon.
- Specifically, a longer baseline survey at multiple locations at/much closer to the nearest receptors, under more reliable weather conditions, and with representative background sound levels derived in closer accordance with BS 4142 and supporting guidance, would produce a more reliable assessment.
- We have been instructed to carry out this work (and calculations to validate the noise modelling results) and it is our view that no decision should be made on the planning application until this work has been completed and the results of the E3P report are appropriately verified.



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## Memo Status

Rev	Date	Prepared by	Checked by
-	26 January 2025	Gary Percival MIOA	Andy Thompson MIOA

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## Disclaimer

This memorandum was completed by Adrian James Acoustics Ltd. on the basis of a defined programme of work and terms and conditions agreed with the Client. The memorandum has been prepared with all reasonable skill, care, and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the Client and taking into account the project objectives, the agreed scope of works, prevailing site conditions and the degree of manpower and resources allocated to the project. Recommendations in this memorandum are for acoustic purposes only, and it is the responsibility of the Project Manager or Architect to ensure that all other requirements are met including (but not limited to) structure, fire, and Building Controls.

Adrian James Acoustics Ltd accepts no responsibility, following the issue of the memorandum, for any matters arising outside the agreed scope of the works.

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**To:** [Clerk@balsham.net](#); [clerk@brinkleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](#); [Katherine Hyett](#); [clerk@carltoncumwillinghampc.org.uk](#); [clerk@horseheath-pc.gov.uk](#); [Enquiries](#); [Jessica Ashbridge](#); [Susan Bailey](#); [swaffhampriorclerk@gmail.com](#); [parish.council@westwickham.org](#); [Cameron Biggs](#); [Jess Ashbridge](#)  
**Subject:** Kingsway Area Parish Council Alliance  
**Date:** 30 January 2026 18:33:55  
**Attachments:** [Parish\\_Council\\_Alliance\\_WES5\\_1\(LPF\).pdf](#)

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CAUTION: This email originates from outside of Burwell Parish Council  
Dear Clerks,

Please could you forward this to your councillors.

### 1. Targeted Consultation

The Targeted Consultation by Kingsway Solar ends on this coming Wednesday, 4th February. Please remember to submit your council's response before that deadline.

You can read the response from the Kingsway Solar Community Action group at <https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Jan-Feb-26-Targeted-Consultation-KSCA-response.docx.pdf>

You can also read the [response from West Wrating Parish Council](#) (as yet unratified).

### 2. NESO News

As mentioned in a previous email, at the end of 2025 NESO reviewed the queue of solar and BESS development projects to identify which would and which wouldn't be given a connection agreement to the National Grid. This was done because there were far more development projects in the pipeline than the UK needs or the National Grid could accommodate. On Friday 23rd January 2026 the legal steering committee (Simon Chandler, Nick Acklam, Ian Monks, and Simon Thorley) met with David Vernon to ask him about the effect of NESO's review on the Kingsway project and their plans in response to that decision. More detailed minutes are available but the key points were:

- David Vernon confirmed that Kingsway only have a Gate 1 offer. This means that Kingsway do not have an agreed connection to the national grid.
- Additional 'windows' will open at future dates to get that gate 1 converted to gate 2 (an agreed connection date), but it looks very unlikely that will happen before 2035.
- Kingsway intends to move ahead with the full DCO application with submission probably late March. The purpose of this is to be in a state of readiness should grid capacity become available. (Note, this region is the most congested in the country, so the queue is likely to be long and competitive).
- Kingsway's BESS is not "protected", which means there is no agreement with NESO for them to be able to connect it to the national grid, and they are unlikely to get an agreement at a future date. However, David Vernon said that Kingsway will include BESS in their application in case the UK's need for new BESS changes.
- If Kingsway does not get permission for BESS they would proceed with a solar-only development. KSCA research shows the business case for solar-only projects is fragile.
- David Vernon admitted the grid connection is a major uncertainty for them.
- If all goes to their plans it may take 15 months to get a decision from the Secretary of State then a further 2 years of procurement before building can begin. Construction could start 2029 to be ready for 2033. Most observers think 2035 is the earliest new capacity will become available.

The legal steering committee is reviewing this new information and will factor that into

our planning for challenging Kingsway after they make their DCO application. In 2 weeks we will be meeting to discuss all this with our MPs, Pippa Heylings and Charlotte Cain.

### **3. Authorising our legal team**

Please find attached a letter from Richard Buxton solicitors seeking agreement between each member of the Parish Council Alliance and Richard Buxton Solicitors regarding representations to oppose the Kingsway Solar DCO. Would you please discuss this as a council and if you approve, sign the appropriate section of schedule A. Do ask if you have any questions.

### **4, Funding for legal work**

It would be extremely helpful to our fundraising team if you could tell us if your Parish Council allocated some budget in 2026 to help with legal fees that will be incurred this year. That information will help with our budgeting for the legal work. We expect that most donations toward paying the legal fees will be made by wealthy individuals and businesses from our community; however anything your Parish Councils can contribute will help. Because every PC has different spending priorities, different levels of reserve, and different levels of precept, it hasn't really been possible to give any guidance about what we hoped the individual councils would contribute. The contributions that I know about vary enormously from nothing, to a few hundred pounds, to £10,000. I'll soon be sending a summary of the legal costs incurred so far and what we expect to be spending the legal fund on in the near future.

### **5. Kingsway Solar Community Alliance AGM**

The AGM will take place in Weston Colville Reading Room on Wednesday 11th February, 7pm - 8pm. You're welcome to come along to hear about the community and legal campaigns and to find out what's coming next in the NSIP process.

Regards,

Simon Chandler

West Wrattling Parish Council and KCSA committee

Dear Parish Councils

### **Kingsway Solar Farm**

This letter is to confirm the agreement between the members of the Parish Council Alliance (composed of the Parish Councils in schedule A) and Richard Buxton Solicitors regarding representations to oppose the Kingsway Solar DCO. The proposal comprises of solar panels and a BESS unit with an export capacity exceeding 50 MW. It also includes a new Overhead Line grid connection to the National Grid's planned Burwell South substation to the north. The development is planned for three large parcels situated east of Cambridge around the villages of West Wratting, Weston Colville, Brinkley and Balsham and the proposed pylon route extends across some 13 kilometres of prime agricultural land around the Newmarket area. ("the Development").

The Development is currently at the pre-application stage with the draft DCO expected to be submitted in March 2026.

### Credentials

I have been a Partner at the firm since 2014 will be working on this matter assisted by Adele Gisby, Paralegal. I have dealt with renewable energy matters including wind farms and the early generation solar projects since joining the firm in 2008. We will also bring in Susy Gandy, legal adviser originally qualified planning barrister now working with us directly. She has had numbers solar farm and BESS matters and was the lead contact for the on-shore cable DCOs in Suffolk.

We have instructed Andrew Parkinson, barrister, Landmark Chambers.

When BESS applications started appearing in 2015, we acted for Roger Ader in Hawkchurch and responded to numerous proposed BESS applications in the nearby village and all were either withdrawn or refused. This culminated in our firm leading a successful strategy to oppose the Pound Road, Hawkchurch Devon BESS at appeal (PINS ref: APP/U1105/W/23/3319803). Andrew was our barrister for the appeal.

Since Hawkchurch, Adele and I have been instructed on at least four other BESS applications: Earthcott in South Gloucestershire (BESS), New Ash Green in Kent, (solar and BESS), Briercliffe in Burnley (BESS) and Whistlemead in Wiltshire (solar and BESS) as well as more than 10 stand-alone solar farms. We are also currently instructed on an onshore cable route for an offshore wind project in North Devon. Through this work we have developed a strong rota of experts we rely on to assist us with identifying potential issues with BESS/solar projects.

### Parish Council Alliance

In June 2025, we were instructed by Simon Thorley and West Wrating Parish Council to conduct an initial review on the Development and advise on possible paths to challenge the Development through the NSIP process. Since then, several parish councils have formed an alliance with West Wrating PC and expressed their desire to support any objections submitted by Richard Buxton Solicitors on their behalf.

We have included at the end of this letter space for a signature by each of the Parish Councils currently part of the Alliance through which they consent to their name being included in correspondence sent by Richard Buxton Solicitors regarding the Kingsway Solar Farm. We would ask that either the Clerk or Chair of the Parish Councils sign the letter, if another Parish Councillor would like to sign the agreement, please ensure a note is sent on Parish Council letterhead to Adele ([agisby@richardbuxton.co.uk](mailto:agisby@richardbuxton.co.uk)) confirming that that individual has authority to sign the agreement on the Parish Council's behalf.

To ensure effective communication, we would ask that instructions are agreed amongst the Alliance and communicated to us via a nominated spokesperson who has been given authority to provide instructions on their behalf. Currently, this spokesperson is Simon Thorley KC, and we assume this will continue to be the case unless told otherwise. By signing this letter, each Parish Council agrees to this arrangement.

We will ensure that drafts of all representations are shared with Simon before being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate or otherwise. He will then be responsible for discussing the draft with the Alliance and returning any comments to us. If, after reviewing a draft, or at any other time for that matter, a Parish Council wishes to be omitted from the Alliance we would ask that the person who previously signed this agreement writes to Lisa, Adele and Simon confirming this to be the case.

### Fee liability

For the avoidance of doubt, West Wrating Parish Council will remain the main client in this matter and will remain responsible for final instructions and any fees owed. No other Parish Council is to be liable for our fees in this matter unless explicitly agreed otherwise.

Yours faithfully



**RICHARD BUXTON SOLICITORS**

## Schedule A

<b>Balsham Parish Council</b>	<b>Little Abington Parish Council</b>
<b>Brinkley Parish Council</b>	<b>Reach Parish Council</b>
<b>Burwell Parish Council</b>	<b>Swaffham Prior Parish Council</b>
<b>Carlton cum Willingham Parish Council</b>	<b>West Wickham Parish Council</b>
<b>Horseheath Parish Council</b>	<b>West Wratting Parish Council</b>
<b>Linton Parish Council</b>	<b>Weston Colville Parish Council</b>



# CBP Forum Minutes

06/01/2026: 7:30pm

## Objectives:

- To deliver on the Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Action Plans as agreed by Burwell Parish Council and to facilitate networking between relevant groups and stakeholders around the village to achieve this.
- Prevent or minimise pollution to air, water and land
- Protect and enhance the quality, extent and accessibility of Burwell's 'green infrastructure' (open spaces, trees, waterways and natural environment) for people and biodiversity.

## Vision

- For Burwell Parish Council to become carbon neutral by 2030
- To have a plan to manage climate emergencies
- To support the reduction of Burwell's carbon footprint, increase biodiversity and access to green spaces.

**Present:** Geraldine Tate, Liz Swift, Paul Webb, John Hughes (Wicken Fen), Nicola Hallows (Wild Burwell), Martin O'Leary (Spring Close), Katherine Hyett (Clerk)

### 1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Chair: Liz Swift proposed Geraldine Tate, Paul Webb seconded the proposal: Geraldine Tate was duly elected as Chair.

Vice-Chair: Geraldine Tate nominated Liz Swift as Vice-Chair, Paul Webb seconded the proposal and Liz Swift as duly elected as Vice-Chair.

### 2. Apologies for absence: Jim Perry, Lea Dodds, Ian Woodroffe

### 3. Approval of the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Liz Swift, seconded by Geraldine Tate and agreed by all.

### 4. Change proposed to Terms of Reference

It was agreed to:

- **make a recommendation to council to remove the quorum number of 8.**

As the forum is now operating as a working group it can only make recommendations to council not decisions, so a quorum isn't required.

The group discussed inviting BEAT (Burwell Energy Awareness Team)– it was decided to defer the decision until after their presentation to Council at the end of January. Liz Swift provided an overview of the BEAT meeting held the previous night.

### 5. Projects Update

#### a) Spring Close chalk stream

This hasn't progressed trying to determine responsibility for outflow pipe. Nicola Hallows asked if we could we purchase a tile from Digdat – about £60, Paul

Webb said ECAN may be able to purchase – they were looking into this. KH to chase up the Historic England visit to Spring Close.

Peter Bates (ECAN) has pulled together various local organisations to create a chalk stream network to apply for more serious funding and purchase shared equipment. Paul is a director of ECAN. Steve Boreham has set out what can be done and that the group can be ambitious in applying for funding – grants of up to £50k are available. John Hughes may also be able to help with this as National Trust will be applying for funding. KH to chase exact testing sites of Anglian water.

- b) Renewable energy - Lea and Liz attended a teams meeting set up by the planners about the Sunnica application.

KH to email National Grid to ask if they have any updates on Burwell renewable energy applications following release of information from NESO.

- c) Programme of educational activities

The aim is to initially organise something at least once a quarter. Ideas discussed:

- Waste prevention workshop – KH to organise between dates of repair and swish cafes preferably.
- Exploring biodiversity – bioblitz/Pauline's swamp (Wild Burwell to organise - Wicken Fen possibly help)
- Chalk streams/Ecology talk (Steve Boreham) – Nicola Hallows to get in touch with Steve.
- Earth café - last quarter of the year – Paul Webb to organise.

## 6. Forum Community Updates:

- a) **Burwell Environmental Group** - been dormant for 24 months. Paul Webb to update at the next meeting

- b) **Wild Burwell** – placed most of the new tree guards on Spring Close field.

Members of Wild Burwell went to 'from the Ground up' initial meeting.

Held the Wassail

Asked about their request for changes in verge cutting. KH will update Nicky Hallows and Martin O'Leary separately and update re. trees.

- c) **Spring Close/Priory Meadow Management Group**

Martin O'Leary asked about trees for the Orchard, KH confirmed we had been successful in our application but didn't know when we would be receiving them yet. Pruning of apple trees is progressing.

- d) **Pauline's Swamp**

A site meeting is being arranged with some of the volunteers about ivy cut on trees. John Hughes said we can borrow tools from Wicken Fen

- e) **Farmer's representative** – KH to put message out to try and find representatives

- f) **Local Businesses** – see above

- g) **National Trust/Wicken Fen** – diggers starting to work on Hurdle Hall to raise the water table and create a bund. They still need to sort abstraction from the river.

Aim is to keep the Peat wet and stop carbon release, create a small wildlife reserve. Cycle bridge: planning should be submitted but not all funding in place. County Council are building the bridge, should be built later this year.

Looking at funding from Anglian Water at other National Trust places (not Wicken Fen) however they would hopefully provide us with letters of support for

applications we would make. National Trust are limited on applications they can make.

Out for tender for a spatial framework to manage access to their land.

Wicken Fen has now joined up with Anglesey Abbey.

Feeding back into Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local plan – incorporates housing and connections with nature. John Hughes to circulate link to the group.

- h) **Repair/Swish café:** Repair Cafe 1<sup>st</sup> February, Swish 8<sup>th</sup> March. Please advertise it.

## **7. Review of CBP Biodiversity and Climate Change Plans**

This was discussed briefly – we talked about creating a traffic light system. The group wanted to ask Lea Dodds (absent) if he would consider looking at that.

## **8. Other relevant programmes (any updates):**

The group discussed how many different local plans/groups there are and that it can be a bit confusing. This agenda item is to try and feedback any relevant things from those groups that may support our initiatives

- a) The Great Collaboration – Katherine Hyett asked all to look at the documents provided and let her know if they are happy to submit their contact information as requested or let her know if they are aware of any relevant groups as per the list.
- b) Local Nature Recovery Strategy – John Hughes explained a bit more about this. There are likely to be future iterations.
- c) Cambridgeshire County Council's *Nature Recovery FROM THE GROUND UP* - There are 2 officers with 3 years of funding. Officers were seeking information about what should happen and what we could offer. Wild Burwell have been active with this group – essentially, they asked for a wish list. There is a follow up meeting happening soon. Wild Burwell to act as the lead on this.

## **9. Any other business:** None

## **10. Date of next meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

**Meeting closed 9pm**

**Signed**

**Dated**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 following Full Council.**

**Present:** Paul Webb (Chair), Geraldine Tate, Lea Dodds, Liz Swift, Pat Cleary, John Damien, Ryan Noyes, Brenda Wilson, Yvonne Rix (RFO), Katherine Hyett (Clerk).

Ben Vinten observed the meeting as a potential Parish Councillor.

**F&GP/27012026/01 Apologies for absences and declarations of interests**

An apology for absence had been received from Linda Kitching who was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments.

Pat Cleary declared an interest for the update on football charges.

**F&GP/27012026/02 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 25.11.2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2026 were approved and signed as a true and correct record. Proposed by Liz Swift and seconded by Lea Dodds.

**F&GP/27012026/03 Consideration of the Action Sheet and updates from previous meeting:**

Local Council Risk System

Katherine Hyett reported that there had been no need for any further risk assessments to be undertaken as a result of actions taken by the Council. However, the Clerk raised that there is a need for an assessment to be undertaken to reduce the risk of Hand/Arm Vibration Syndrome. Paul Webb reported that there is a risk assessment for the MVAS signs, but this may need to be updated.

All the risk assessments need to be reviewed. There have been many changes in Health and Safety law which needs to be reflected in our policies and assessments. There is an option to outsource the work required. The Clerk is in the process of obtaining quotations to carry out the work. The cost is likely to be upwards of £1000. As this work is required as a matter of urgency and no allowance has been made in the budget, the funding will need to come from general reserves.

CCLA Investment

The Group noted that the balance of the CCLA Account currently stands at £117,531.47. Yvonne Rix reminded the Group that no decision has been made yet about moving more of the Council funds to a higher interest rate account. This to be discussed at the next meeting.

**F&GP/27012026/04 Quarterly Report to 31.12.25**

Yvonne Rix informed the Group that the Quarterly Report is not ready to be presented but would be presented to Full Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

**F&GP/27012026/05 Burwell Day Centre Buildings Insurance Oct 25 to Sept 26 £169.59**

The Parish Council has received an invoice from Cambridgeshire County Council for insuring the Day Centre building. The cost is £169.59. The lease which is in the Parish Council name indicates that the Parish Council is responsible for the payment of the building's insurance.

The following recommendation to Full Council to be made:

***That the invoice from Cambridgeshire County Council for the Day Centre buildings insurance in the sum of £169.59 is paid by the Parish Council.***

***Proposed by Paul Webb, seconded by Liz Swift, and agreed by all.***

Following requests from the Day Centre, the Clerk had sent a copy to the lease to them in December and again in January. It is important that the Council fully establishes the requirements of the lease for the Parish Council. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the possibility of the lease being extended prior to any changes being made to the reorganisation of local government.

**F&GP/27012026/06 2026/2027 Charges and Fees**

Gardiner Memorial Hall and Mandeville Hall

After a brief discussion on whether the charges should be raised or not Liz Swift made the following proposal, seconded by Geraldine Tate and approved by all.

***That charges for the Gardiner Memorial Hall and Mandeville Hall should remain the same as 2025/2026. A letter should also be sent to all regular hirers informing them that it is the intention of the Council to increase charges for 2027/2028.***

The Group also requested a list of all regular hirers and the rate they are charged for using the hall. The cost of hiring the Gardiner Memorial Hall per hour is lower than Mandeville and this now needs to be brought more in line.

#### Allotments

Due to having to notify allotment holders of increases a year in advance the decision being made tonight is for the charges being made from October 2027. The Council has already agreed that the charge from October 2026 would be 33p per square metre. The following proposal was agreed for recommendation to Full Council by the Group:

***That Allotment Rent from October 2027 be increased by 1p to 34p per square metre.***

#### Cemetery

Liz Swift proposed, seconded by Lea Dodds that all cemetery fees should all increase by £10.00 with exception of the internment of a child under the age of 12 years which would remain the same.

With one abstention, the proposal was approved as a recommendation to Full Council.

***The Group recommends to Full Council that all cemetery fees with the exception of the internment of a child under the age of 12 is increased by £10.00.***

#### Tennis Courts

The Tennis Courts currently cost £8.00 per hour to hire. Lea Dodds proposed, seconded by Liz Swift that the hourly rate should be increased to £9.00 per hour. Following agreement by all, the following recommendation to be made to Full Council.

***That the cost to hire the Tennis Courts is increased to £9.00 per hour from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.***

The Tennis Courts need to be actively promoted including a sign explaining how to book on the court itself.

#### Skate Park

Although previously agreed, Max Jamieson (Shredder Skate School) has not yet been charged for use of the Skate Park. The Group agreed that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 a charge should be made of £15.00 per month and this would include holiday sessions, competitions, and general coaching sessions. A contract would also be drawn up for his use of the Skate Park by his business. Proposed by Lea Dodds and seconded by Liz Swift.

***The following recommendation to be made to Full Council:  
that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 a charge should be made of £15.00 per month and this would holiday sessions, competitions, and general coaching sessions. A contract to also be drawn up for his use of the Skate Park by his business.***

#### Update on Football Charges

The costs to the Council for the maintenance of the football pitches at the Recreation Ground and Margaret Field, and the costs of running the pavilion have been shared with the Football Club. It was explained at a meeting with the Club that it is the Council's intention for the club to be responsible for around 50% of the costs. It currently costs over £30,000 per annum to provide the facilities used for football. The Football Club currently pay £7,500 per annum and to work towards the 50% contribution the sum of £11,000 per annum has been suggested. The Football Club is now considering this.

Liz Swift proposed, seconded by Lea Dodds that the following recommendation is made to Full Council. All agreed the proposal.

***That Burwell Football Club is charged £11,000 for the use of the Recreation Ground and Margeret Field for the 26/27 season (1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2027).***

## **F&GP/27012026/07 Bank Signatories and Lloyd Credit Card amendments**

Some amendments are needed on the mandate for the Unity Trust Bank Account. Following a proposal from Lea Dodds, seconded by Brenda Wilson and approved by all, the following recommendations to be made to Full Council:

- ***That Robin Dyos and Ian Woodroffe are removed from the Unity Trust Mandate, and that Ian Woodroffe is removed from the CCLA Mandate.***
- ***That Richard Jenkins is added to the Unity Trust Mandate.***
- ***That Katherine Hyett, as Clerk is added to the Unity Trust Mandate to allow access to the account and setting up of payments.***

A letter needs to be sent in respect of the Corporate Purchasing Card resetting the password for Yvonne Rix to allow access to the account. The Group agreed that an additional card should be requested with a credit limit of £1,000 in the Clerk's name. The following proposal was made by Paul Webb, seconded by Geraldine Tate, agreed by all and with recommendation being made to Full Council.

- ***That a letter is sent in respect of the Corporate Purchasing Card to allow the resetting of the password for Yvonne Rix to allow access to the account.***
- ***That an additional Corporate Purchasing Card with a credit limit of £1000 is requested in the Clerk's name.***

## **F&GP/27012026/08 Policies**

3 new policies had been sent to all councillors via email with the opportunity to review prior to this meeting. Some comments were received back from Lea Dodds which were considered; however, he was satisfied they progress. No feedback was received from other councillors.

### **1) Donations policy**

After a brief discussion it was decided to defer a decision as a redraft was required.

### **2) Code of conduct**

The Clerk reported that there are a number of reasons why the Council should accept the proposed Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct in place of the Council's current one. The following reasons support the adoption.

- The new model code and its supporting guidance have been specifically revised to reflect the needs and situations relevant to parish and town councils rather than principal councils like ECDC.
- A single code across the sector provides consistency and clarity, which is why NALC endorsed the new code and withdrew the NALC template code of conduct.
- The new code is endorsed as part of the Civility and Respect Project, which aims to analyse the causes of bullying and harassment within the local council sector, minimise opportunities for poor behaviour, and provide support where misconduct occurs.
- The new code provides comprehensive coverage of the general principles of councillor conduct, including respect and standards of behaviour, bullying, harassment, and discrimination. It also addresses impartiality and the misuse of position, declarations of interest, and issues relating to bias and pre-determination. These are often missing from the shorter Codes of Conducts that were previously used.

### **3) Complaints Policy**

Current policies/procedures: Burwell Parish Council Complaints Procedure and Parish Councillor Complaints policy

It was proposed to change to the new complaints' procedure drafted by the Clerk. The primary reason to ensure any formal complaints against councillors are managed with impartiality by another body. In the case of *R (Harvey) v Ledbury Town Council (2018)*, it was established that parish councils cannot, in effect, conduct their own investigations and impose their own sanctions, as this violates principles of natural justice and fair process.



It was decided to recommend to full council the adoption of:

- **The Local Government Association Model Code of conduct ensuring we meet the advertising requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and ensuring the Monitoring Officer is kept informed**
- **The newly drafted single Complaint's policy, again notifying the Monitoring officer.**

This was proposed by Ryan Noyes, seconded by Pat Cleary, and approved by all.

Paul Webb asked if we should have a complaints register but it was felt this is not needed.

#### **F&GP/27012026/09 Insurance Policy Renewal**

Yvonne Rix informed the Group that the insurance policy ends on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 and that it would be necessary to obtain three quotations for the renewal in the next few months.

#### **F&GP/27012026/10 Update on the new Assertion 10**

The Clerk explained that the following elements need to be in place by March 31<sup>st</sup> complete to meet Assertion 10:

- The adoption of an ICT Policy – it was agreed that due to timescales that Paul Webb and the Clerk draft the policy to go straight to Council
- Provision of Data Protection Training – The Clerk is hoping to find some suitable ICO videos that she can send to Councillors to provide a basic level of training and this can be reviewed at a later date
- Review of our website accessibility and creation of a new accessibility statement – we are awaiting a report from Vision ICT
- Adopt model publication scheme from the ICO (if not it is considered a breach of the Freedom of Information Act). The Clerk explained that this is merely an update – there is nothing specific for Council to agree so again this should be completed and noted at full council.
- Transparency code – the Clerk has drafted web page pointing to the information required which is mostly Finance – RFO to review reports and ensure this is provided.

#### **F&GP/27012026/11 Update on the provision of vehicle for the Maintenance Officer**

Lea Dodds reported that they are looking more favourably at purchasing a vehicle and that they would be looking further at the options over the next few weeks.

#### **F&GP/27012026/13 Any Other Urgent Matters:**

##### Date for Staff Appraisals

Liz Swift and Lea Dodds are considering dates for carrying out the Staff Appraisals.

##### Finance and General Purposes Working Group Membership

The Clerk is in the process of asking all Councillors which working groups that they would like to be involved with. It is hoped that some of the new Councillors will be interested in joining the Finance and General Purposes Working Group, which currently only has 5 members.

#### **F&GP/27012026/14 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

##### Confidential Item

The Clerk and the potential Parish Councillor left the meeting for this item.

#### **F&GP/27012026/12 Update on benchmarking of the Clerk's role**

Following a proposal from Geraldine Tate, seconded by Brenda Wilson and agreed by all, the following recommendation to be made to full Council:

- ***That the revised job description for the Clerk is approved***
- ***That the following re-evaluation of the Clerk's role is implemented:***
  - 1. The Clerk's post should be set at Spinal Point 32 (LC2) from 1.1.2026***
  - 2. An increase of one spinal point annually, satisfactory staff appraisal from 1.4.2026 until Spinal Point 36 is achieved (top of LC3 – below substantive range).***

### Superannuation

Following a short discussion the following recommendation is to be made to Full Council, proposed by Liz Swift, seconded by Brenda Wilson, and agreed by all members:

- **That the Employer contribution for the NEST Pension Scheme is increased from 3% to 5% from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.**

The meeting closed at 9.44 pm.

Signed

Dated

Version	Description of Change	Reviewing Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Minutes reference adopted	Next Review Date
1.0		Katherine Hyett - Clerk	F&GP Full Council	Annual	TBC	TBC

# Burwell Parish Council Complaints Procedure

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## Purpose

Burwell Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in this area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by Burwell Parish Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Parish Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

1. This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.
2. It is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to ensure that complaints are responded to and that the Parish Council takes action as a result of them.
3. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
  - a. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as their employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
  - b. complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council on **insert date** and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the Parish Council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of East Cambridgeshire District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
4. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Parish Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Parish Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Parish Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Parish Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Parish Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

## Complaints Procedure

6. Wherever possible, the Parish Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Parish Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
7. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Parish Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chair of the Parish Council who will report your complaint to the Parish Council.
8. The Parish Clerk or the Parish Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Parish Council.
9. The Parish Clerk or the Chair of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Parish Council proposes to take because of your complaint (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed).
10. If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you should contact the Parish Clerk within 20 working days to ask for your complaint to be referred to the Full Council (usually within eight weeks due to the meeting schedule).
11. It will be considered whether the circumstances of your complaint warrant the exclusion of the press and public. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint within five working days of the meeting. The outcome will be reported to the next council meeting in public.

## Contacts

### Parish Clerk:

Burwell Parish Council

Jubilee Reading Room, 99 The Causeway, Burwell, Cambridge, CB25 0DU

Tel: 01638 743142

Email: [burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### Chair:

Burwell Parish Council

Jubilee Reading Room, 99 The Causeway, Burwell, Cambridge, CB25 0DU

Tel: 01638 743142

[elizabeth.swift@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.swift@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Local Government Association**

### **Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

#### **Joint statement**

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

## **Introduction**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

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

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

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



## **General principles of councillor conduct**

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

## **Application of the Code of Conduct**

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

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

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

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

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

## **Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

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

### **General Conduct**

#### **1. Respect**

##### **As a councillor:**

**1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.**

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

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

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

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

#### **2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

##### **As a councillor:**

**2.1 I do not bully any person.**

**2.2 I do not harass any person.**

**2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.**

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

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and

contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

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

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **3. Impartiality of officers of the council**

**As a councillor:**

#### **3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

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

### **4. Confidentiality and access to information**

**As a councillor:**

#### **4.1 I do not disclose information:**

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
  - iv. the disclosure is:**
    - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
    - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
    - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

#### **4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.**

#### **4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

## **5. Disrepute**

### **As a councillor:**

#### **5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

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

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

## **6. Use of position**

### **As a councillor:**

#### **6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **7. Use of local authority resources and facilities**

### **As a councillor:**

#### **7.1 I do not misuse council resources.**

#### **7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport

- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

## **8. Complying with the Code of Conduct**

### **As a Councillor:**

**8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**

**8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**

**8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**

**8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

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

### **Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority**

## **9. Interests**

### **As a councillor:**

**9.1 I register and disclose my interests.**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

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

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

**Appendix B** sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

## **10. Gifts and hospitality**

### **As a councillor:**

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

#### **Selflessness**

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

#### **Integrity**

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

#### **Objectivity**

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

#### **Accountability**

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

#### **Openness**

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

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

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



## Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**“Disclosable Pecuniary Interest”** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

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

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it ]

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

## Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
  - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
  - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
  - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

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

**Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

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

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

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
<b>Land and Property</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
<b>Licenses</b>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
<b>Securities</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

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

## **Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
  - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
  - c) any body
    - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
    - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
    - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

## Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

**Best practice 1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Best practice 2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Best practice 3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Best practice 4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Best practice 6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Best practice 7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Best practice 8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Best practice 9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Best practice 10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Best practice 11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Best practice 12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Best practice 13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Best practice 14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Best practice 15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

***The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.***



Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

# Burwell Parish Council

## IT Policy

This document is based on the template provided by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP). It is provided to help smaller authorities meet the requirements set out in the 2025 Practitioners' Guide. Assertion 10 (Digital and Data Compliance) requires all smaller authorities to adopt a formal IT policy. This template supports councils in setting clear expectations for how Clerks, Councillors, and staff should use digital systems, devices, and software securely and legally, whether on council-owned or personal equipment.

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## Introduction

Burwell Parish Council (the Council) recognises the importance of effective, reliable and secure information technology (IT) and email systems in supporting its statutory functions, decision-making, service delivery and communications.

This policy sets out the standards, responsibilities and acceptable use requirements for IT equipment, systems and email provided or used on behalf of Burwell Parish Council.

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## Scope

This policy applies to: - All councillors of Burwell Parish Council - The Parish Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and any other employees - Contractors, consultants and volunteers who access Council IT systems or data

It covers all Council-owned or Council-approved: - Computers, laptops and mobile devices - Networks and internet connections - Software and applications - Data and information systems - Email accounts and cloud-based services

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Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

## Acceptable Use of IT Resources and Email

Council IT resources and email accounts must be used primarily for official Council business.

Limited personal use may be permitted provided that it: - Does not interfere with Council duties or working time - Does not incur additional cost to the Council - Does not breach this policy or any other Council policy

Users must: - Act professionally and lawfully at all times - Respect copyright, licensing and intellectual property rights - Not access, create, store or transmit material that is offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or unlawful.

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## Devices and Software

Where possible, IT equipment, software and applications will be provided or approved by the Council.

Users must not: - Install unauthorised software or applications on Council devices - Alter security settings or system configurations without permission - Use personal software or devices for Council business unless explicitly authorised by the Clerk/RFO

These controls are necessary to protect Council systems and data from security risks.

All councillors, employees, and other authorised users must lock their devices when leaving their desks to prevent unauthorised access. This applies to all council and personal devices used for work. Failure to comply may lead to further action/disciplinary action.

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## Data Management and Information Security

All Council information must be handled in accordance with: - The Data Protection Act 2018 - UK GDPR - The Council's Data Protection and Information Governance policies

Users must: - Store and transmit sensitive or confidential data securely using approved systems - Ensure appropriate backups are maintained where required - Use secure methods for the disposal or destruction of data and equipment

Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

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## Network and Internet Use

The Council's network and internet access must be used responsibly for Council purposes.

Users must not: - Download or share copyrighted material without appropriate permission  
- Use Council systems for illegal activities - Access websites that pose a security or reputational risk to the Council

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## Email Use and Standards

Council-provided email accounts must be used for all Council business and communications. No Council communications should be made from your personal email addresses.

Emails must: - Be written in a professional, courteous and appropriate tone - Accurately reflect Council decisions and positions - Not be used for party-political purposes

Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent by email unless appropriate security or encryption measures are in place.

Users must remain vigilant against phishing, malware and scams and should: - Verify senders before opening attachments or links - Report suspicious emails immediately

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## Passwords and Account Security

Users are responsible for the security of their accounts.

Passwords must: - Be strong and unique - Not be shared with others - Be changed regularly or immediately if compromise is suspected

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Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

## Mobile Devices and Remote Working

Where Council business is conducted remotely or on mobile devices, users must: - Use passcodes or biometric security - Ensure devices are not accessible to unauthorised persons - Apply the same standards of care as when working in the Council office

All devices containing council information must be stored safely and securely when not in use, i.e. when travelling, when working from home or councillors/employees own devices. Portable equipment (unless locked in a secure cabinet or office) should be kept with or near the user at all times; should not be left unattended when away from council premises and should never be left on view in parked vehicles.

Loss or theft of any device used for Council business must be reported immediately to the Clerk.

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## Monitoring and Privacy

The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of IT systems and email accounts to: - Ensure compliance with this policy - Protect Council systems and data - Meet legal and regulatory obligations

Any monitoring will be carried out lawfully and proportionately in accordance with data protection legislation.

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## Retention and Archiving

Emails and electronic records must be retained and archived in line with: - Legal requirements - The Council's retention schedule

Users should regularly review and delete unnecessary emails and files in accordance with these requirements.

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Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

## Reporting Security Incidents

All suspected or actual IT or information security incidents must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk or designated IT contact.

This includes: - Data breaches or loss - Phishing or malware incidents - Unauthorised access to systems or information

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## Training and Awareness

The Council will provide guidance and training, as appropriate, to ensure councillors and staff understand: - IT security responsibilities - Data protection requirements - Safe use of email and digital systems

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## Councillor-Specific Responsibilities

In addition to the general requirements of this policy, councillors of Burwell Parish Council have specific responsibilities arising from their elected role.

Councillors must: - Use Council email accounts only for legitimate Council business - Ensure that communications accurately reflect Council decisions and do not purport to represent the Council unless properly authorised - Take particular care when handling personal data, confidential information and commercially sensitive material - Comply with the Members' Code of Conduct, including obligations relating to confidentiality, respect and proper use of resources - Ensure that Council equipment, documents and electronic information are kept secure and are not accessed by unauthorised persons.

Councillors should be mindful that emails and electronic records may be subject to public access requests, audit, investigation or disclosure under data protection or freedom of information legislation.

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## Compliance and Breaches

Failure to comply with this policy may result in: - Withdrawal or restriction of IT access - Investigation under relevant Council procedures - Further action where appropriate

Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation of policy	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	Min Ref:	

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## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, technology or Council operations.

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## Contact

For IT-related queries or to report incidents, contact the **Parish Clerk**, Burwell Parish Council. [Burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk) 01638743142