

Greatham Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 8pm

To join the meeting please use this address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84000692227>

Or by telephone: 0203 901 7895

Meeting ID: 840 0069 2227

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of Greatham Parish Council for the transaction of business set out below. This meeting is being held remotely using the Zoom video conferencing platform.

J Ives

Jane Ives, Clerk to the Council

8th April 2021

AGENDA

1. **Chair's Announcements**
2. **Apologies for Absence** : To note any apologies received from Councillors
3. **Declarations of Interest:** *Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State under the Localism Act 2011. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses & votes on the matter*
4. **Apology from Cllr Susie Harris**
5. **Approval of Minutes:** To approve minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 10th March 2021
6. **Update on actions arising from Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held as above**
7. **Report from District Councillors:** Report from Cllr Adam Carew/Cllr Phillip Davies
8. **Report from County Councillor:** To note a report from Cllr Russell Oppenheimer (Appendix 1)
9. **Report from Planning Chair:** To hear an update on any planning matters
10. **Public Question Time:** Adjournment of the meeting for 15 minutes to allow the public to raise questions
11. **Parish Council Finances/Administration:**
 - a) **Clerk's Report including Financial Report:** To receive the current report (Appendix 2)
 - b) **Payment Schedule:** To approve current payments (Appendix 3)
 - c) **Asset Register:** To consider and approve amendments to the Asset Register (Appendix 4)
 - d) **Insurance Renewal:** To consider and approve the Council's insurance renewal
12. **Defibrillator:** To agree costs to purchase a new defibrillator cabinet and costs of installation at the Village Hall. To note current maintenance costs. (Appendix 5)
13. **Consider options for a return to face to face meetings post 7th May:**
 - a) Consider meeting arrangements post 7th May (Appendix 6)
 - b) Consider a delegation scheme, if required, until a date when face to face meetings can resume safely (Appendix 7)
14. **Code of Conduct:** To consider and adopt an updated Code of Conduct based on the EHDC adopted code (Appendix 8)
15. **Vision/Strategy for Old Church:** To consider a draft roadmap to produce a vision/strategy for the Old Church

16. Consultation on traffic measures in Greatham: To consider and agree how to consult with residents on traffic calming measures submitted to Hampshire County Council

17. To note reports from representatives of Organisations, Outside Bodies, Working Parties, Leads & Groups

18. Items for next agenda

19. Date of next meeting: Annual Meeting Wednesday 5th May 2021, 8pm. Planning Committee Meeting, Monday 26th April 2021, 8pm (subject to planning applications)

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Motion "In accordance with the provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted."

The exempt session is to discuss tree wardening in the parish

Appendix 1: Report from County Councillor

1. Hampshire is included in Project Gigabit

I was pleased by the Government announcement on 19 March about Project Gigabit, in which Hampshire is included in Phase 1b (we are Lot 27). This is an “outside in” approach which aims to subsidise broadband delivery in the hardest to reach places. Building Digital UK (BDUK) will manage this £5bn process.

I was also pleased that the Government is planning to continue to work with Local Authorities on delivery. There had been some uncertainty as to whether the Government would deal directly with the telecoms industry. It is not yet completely clear to me how it is all going to work but I am working hard to find out. In the meantime, I include the relevant extract from the White Paper below:

“For these and subsequent procurements, we will be managing the Open Market Review and/or Public Review as centralised and scalable BDUK processes, working with local authorities and telecoms providers to build an accurate picture of commercial and subsidised gigabit build plans. From this, we will be able to assess procurement boundaries for Regional Supplier and Local Supplier contracts, and how best to time procurements.”

2. Community Champions programme

I would like to let you know about the Community Champions initiative. The new scheme, which was launched on 9 March, aims to tackle health inequalities by finding people who can help members of their community to pursue better, healthier lifestyles. This may involve supporting someone to give up smoking, take up exercise or eat more healthily, or encouraging someone to get more involved in local activities. Champions will get training, networking invitations and support.

I think it is especially welcome that the programme covers mental health as well as physical health. There is a focus on men’s health and the funding comes from the Step by Step programme.

Anyone who might like to consider registering as a Community Champion can visit this web page for more information.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/communitychampions>

3. New Campaign to encourage businesses to move to Hampshire

The campaign – ‘Make Hampshire work for you’ – has been devised by the County Council’s Economic Development service, Business Hampshire, in collaboration with local authority partners, and invites London commuters to ‘Work Smarter – Live Happier – Commute Closer’.

The COVID pandemic has transformed the way lots of people work, with many re-thinking the need for a long commute five days a week. In Hampshire, as we emerge out of lockdown and enter recovery, we are moving towards a greener and more digital working future. Offering satellite business offices in this way is just a first step to recognising our county as an even greater place to do business, in the light of the accelerating change arising from the pandemic and with all its existing advantages as a flagship green economic powerhouse and international gateway.

With support from Commercial Property specialists, the campaign showcases flexible office solutions across key locations in Hampshire including Basingstoke, Farnborough, Hart, East Hampshire and Winchester. Find out more at: <https://businesshampshire.co.uk/land-property/satellite-offices>

4. South Downs Enterprise Partnership

Last month I mentioned the revamp of the South Downs Partnership (SDP) which is set to get a new Chair and a more prominent role. This month I would like to let you know about another new initiative: the South Downs Enterprise Partnership (SDEP). We must be careful not to confuse these two entities!

The SDEP is a business community for likeminded local economic and social enterprise partners who positively contribute to the National Park. It is our aspiration that the creation of a business community will strengthen the rural economy, improve collaboration between SDNP businesses, promote stronger & shorter rural supply chains, promote a 'think and act locally' approach, promoting social responsibility & environmental sustainability, facilitate the positive contribution of SDNP businesses to meeting the challenge of climate change and compliment and add value to existing business support offered by our partners.

Priority sectors will be land-based, the visitor economy and food and drink producers. Networking events will be organised and other benefits include:

1) Association and Connection with the South Downs brand – use of the South Downs logo and wording stating that they are 'accredited' Members of the South Downs

2) Marketing - Widen marketing reach and benefit sales through the South Downs website, e-newsletters to the public and between Members, social Media platforms and through events

3) Business Skills - Build business skills through workshops, seminars and information sharing.

4) Connection between Members - Inspire collaboration & support with other businesses. Shorten and strengthen rural supply chains, and use of B2B platform

5) Access to evidence and research – SDNPA hold useful research for businesses, i.e. Market Segmentation Report, Visitor Surveys

There will be no initial fees for participation in the SDEP. It is hoped that after four years there may be between 3-5 "corporate partners" who will contribute fees but these will probably be larger businesses such as vineyards.

If you or anyone you know would be interested to find out more or join, please contact:

enterprise@southdowns.gov.uk

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER

County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

Appendix 2: Clerk's Report

Freedom of Information

The Council has received a number of Freedom of Information requests over the last few months. I intend now to start publishing all requests and responses on our website (personal information redacted) as strictly speaking all information should be in the public domain once it has been subject to FOI action.

Councillors should be aware that due to the increasing volume of such requests a lot of my time has been taken up with preparing information and for discussions with councillors on matters that have arisen.

Defibrillator

The defibrillator was put back into the cabinet at the church after batteries and pads were purchased and replaced. The Council have previously resolved to move the defibrillator to the village hall and there is an agenda item to agree costs this evening. One resident has very kindly agreed to be a guardian for the defibrillator and will now check it on a regular basis. It has now been registered with the ambulance service.

Year End/Audit

I am currently working towards completing the year end in time for the internal auditors visit at the end of April.

Council meetings post 7th May

The government has not extended the legislation to allow us to meet remotely after 7th May. We will therefore need to meet face to face in order to hold Council meetings. Council will be asked to adopt a delegation scheme at this meeting to allow for decisions to be made if we are unable to hold face to face meetings due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

Financial Report as at 31st March 2021

The financial records as at 31st March 2021 are as follows:

Receipts 1st March to 31st March 2021

EHDC District Councillor Grant (wildflowers)	£	758.20
Old Church donation	£	20.00

Balances as at 31st March 2021

Current Account	£12,367.34
Deposit Account	£25,044.68
Total at bank	£37,412.02

Earmarked Funds held

CIL fund	£ 8,229.00
Community Engagement	£ 500.00
NDP	£ 1,000.00
Election costs	£ 500.00
Tree works	£ 40.00
S106 project	£ 4,802.00
CFI Scheme	£ 1,000.00
Total Earmarked Funds	£16,071.00

General Reserves Balance **£21,341.02** (total at bank less earmarked funds)

Appendix 3: Payment Schedule

Invoice Date	Payee	Description	Net Total	VAT	Total
		PAYMENTS MADE			
26/03/21	Clerk	Salary March 2021	£809.37	£0.00	£809.37
26/03/21	HMRC	Tax/Ni liability mth 12	£14.15	£0.00	£14.15
25/03/21	Clerk	Expenses/repayment of costs	£189.93	£31.16	£221.09
15/03/21	Headley Parish Council	SLR movement costs	£281.25	£56.25	£337.50
05/03/21	Parish Online	Mapping service annual cost	£75.00	£15.00	£90.00
25/03/21	Cllr O Rook	Costs for bench installation	£40.43	£0.00	£40.43
		PAYMENTS TO BE MADE			
06/04/21	Hampshire Assoc of Local Councils	Affiliation fees (inc. NALC) 2021/22	£318.74	£0.00	£318.74
		TOTALS	£1,728.87	£102.41	£1,831.28

Signed by Chair of Meeting:

Date:

Appendix 4: Asset Register as at 31/03/21

Asset Details					Purchase Details		Payment		Insured value
Date entered on Register	Item	Make	Serial Number	Location	Supplier	Purchase Price (ex VAT)	Invoice Date	Sub Totals	
14/08/06	Greatham Old Church			Petersfield Rd		£1.00		£1.00	£1
14/08/06	War Memorial			St John the Baptist Church		£14,060.69		£14,060.69	£16,619.75
30/03/20	Village Green			Petersfield Rd/Forest Rd		£1.00		£1.00	
20/03/18	Speedwatch equipment			Elly Butler	CA Traffic	£2,258.40	07/09/15	£2,258.40	£2,258.40
31/03/21	Defibrillator & Cabinet	AED Plus		Church Rooms, St John's Church	Donated by Farnham Lions pre 2016 (purchase price = market price)	£1,205.00		£1,205.00	£1,205.00
	<u>OFFICE EQUIPMENT</u>								
14/03/12	Cupboard			Village Hall	Surrey Office Supplies	£85.00	06/01/12		£85.00
14/03/12	Laminator	Fellowes Mars A3	110909vd0065685	Clerk	Viking Direct	£53.49	15/03/12		£53.49
14/03/12	Projector Screen	Metroplan Budget Tripod Screen 240x240 ET1005		Village Hall	AV Partsmaster Ltd	£116.75	05/03/12		£116.75
20/03/18	Colour printer/scanner	Samsung C480FW Colour Laser Printer	08GRB8KJGB026VW	Clerk	Amazon	£209.99	07/11/17		£209.99
20/03/18	External hard drive	Bipra 1TB 2.5" USB 2.0 FAT 32	BOOP81QTJ	Clerk	Amazon	£54.95	16/01/18		£54.95
30/03/20	Laptop computer	Lenovo S340 1415BL		Clerk	Currys PC World	£479.00	11/03/20		£479.00
30/09/20	HDMI cable			Clerk	Amazon	£26.21			£26.21
30/09/20	Extension cable			Clerk	Amazon	£11.68			£11.68
30/09/20	Post Box			Village Hall	Amazon	£24.19			£24.19
30/09/20	Fire extinguisher/blanket			Old Church	Fire Safety Store	£31.95			£31.95
31/03/21	Mobile phone	Nokia 1.3		Clerk		£89.00			£89.00

31/03/21	Webcam	Logitech		Clerk		£24.99			£24.99
						Sub Total for Office Equipment		£1,207.20	
	<u>PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT</u>								
14/08/06	Village Playground (including playsurfaces)			Recreation Ground		£47,156.21			£51,779.32
07/09/15	Zipwire			Recreation Ground	GB Sport & Leisure	£7,613.04	07/09/15		£11,055.42
						Sub Total for Playground Equipment		£54,769.25	
	<u>STREET FURNITURE</u>								
	Flagpole			Village Green		£421.79			£421.79
	Bench			Village Green		£389.90			£1,193.82
03/12/12	Bench			Bakers Field	Donation	£400.00			£400.00
03/03/21	Bench			Old Church	Hemington Rustics	£250.00	06/06/20		£250.00
	Fences			Playground		£2,785.59			£2,785.59
2011	Telephone box			D Rudd		£1.00			
14/08/06	Bus Shelters x 3			2 @ Greatham Inn, 1 @ Digby Way		£14,581.48			£25,000.00
14/08/06	Litter Bins			Bakers Field, bus shelter, playground, school, Hopeswood	Trevor Iles Ltd	£455.76	20/03/06		£455.76
						Sub Total for Street Furniture		£19,285.52	
						£92,788.06		£92,788.06	£114,633.05

Appendix 5: Defibrillator

The cabinet currently housing the defibrillator at the Church is in a poor condition and difficult to open. I am recommending that we purchase a new cabinet for installation at the village hall. The cabinet is heated and will be connected to the electricity supply. The village hall trustees have agreed the location for the cabinet.

The type of cabinet I am proposing is here:



Product specification

Suitable for multiple outdoor environments, the Polycarbonate Outdoor Locked Cabinet will protect your defibrillator, ensuring it is ready for use at a moment's notice.

This cabinet is capable of housing a variety of defibrillator models and will provide protection for your device against the elements and fire. Accompanied with graphics on the front of the cabinet, bystanders will easily understand the contents of the defibrillator as well as the actions required of them during a cardiac emergency.

Cost: £465 + VAT

Cost of installation: £179.85 + VAT

Appendix 6: Preparing for the return of face to face meetings

The regulations that currently allow local authorities to hold meetings remotely until 06 May 2021 will not be extended by the Government, and so face-to-face meetings will need to resume from 07 May.

The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and Hertfordshire County Council have lodged a legal challenge in the High Court that seeks a continuation of local authority remote meetings beyond the 06 May 2021. The date for this challenge to be heard in the courts is not known, and the outcome not guaranteed and so the Council needs to consider how it wishes to move forward.

There is also still much uncertainty around how legislation or COVID-19 risks and restrictions may change over the coming weeks and months.

NALC's position remains that all local councils should continue to meet remotely while the regulations are in force. The guidance in Annex 1 has been written to help local councils prepare for remote council meetings being unlawful from 7th May 2021.

The Council has several options available to it:

1. Continue to meet virtually

Although, technically not permitted, this route is being suggested by some other Councils. Although the risk of legal challenge is low, decisions could be challenged in the courts as ultra-vires.

The 1960 Admission to Meetings Act and the Local Government Act 1972 are understandably silent on the matter of online meetings. In the most recent correspondence from Government they have advised that public attendance at Council meetings should continue to happen online for the time being where possible. In other words, online openness to the public is neither prohibited nor enabled by the 1960 or 1972 Acts.

There is existing case law that says that "a valid meeting normally consist of people who can both see and hear each other" (Byng v London Life Association (1989) 1 All ER 560) and back in March 2012 the government acknowledged this in their advice to charities about attendance at meetings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-meetings-cc48/charities-and-meetings#the-definition-and-forms-of-a-meeting>

2. Temporary Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk

This would be backed up by the meetings plan as usual. This would mean that Committee and Full Council meetings could go ahead virtually and instead of making decisions, would recommend decisions to the Clerk, who would then enact those recommendations under a temporary delegation scheme. The scheme would remain in place until Councillors decided that a return to face-to-face meetings was safe, or that the delegation should cease for any other reason.

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for 5th May and this will be held remotely.

The only other item that is in the forward plan that cannot be delegated to the Clerk is the signing off of the Annual Governance and Audit statements. This needs to be done by 30th June but, providing the internal audit is completed on 30th April as planned, this could be signed off at the Annual Meeting.

3. Hold face-to-face meetings

This would be in line with the advice from NALC, as detailed in Annex 1.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 includes an exception (exception 3) that a gathering is allowed where it is necessary for certain purposes which include "for work purposes or the provision of voluntary or charitable services." Members/officers attending a meeting would fall under this. Additionally, in the letter dated 25 March 2021, from Luke Hall MP recommendations are given on how to hold safe Council meetings, which infers that it would be legal to hold them.

However, provision should be made to enable to public to view the meeting (for example by live streaming on Facebook) and currently I do not know if we are technically able to do this.

The holding of face-to-face meetings could pose a reputational risk to the Council if public perception is that these should not be held until restrictions are lifted.

The Council will also need to take into account the fears and concerns of both Councillors and the Clerk over returning to face-to-face meetings whilst restrictions are still in place. Particularly those who are unvaccinated, have been shielding, or have other health concerns.

Recommendation

That Full Council discusses the options and agrees a way forward.

Annex 1 – NALC advice

To help local councils prepare for this possibility some advice and suggestions are below:

- Consider what council business can be conducted before May so that the council can dedicate time to those issues in remote meetings. The more discussion and decisions you can conduct in remote meetings means the council can aim to hold fewer and shorter face to face meetings after May.
- This may require more meeting time than is currently planned, so the council should look at the meeting schedule in the run-up to May and see if more time or more meetings are required. Where possible, consider holding the annual council meeting and the parish meeting while the current Regulations permit for them to be held remotely.
- Consider when the council does need to meet face to face, and whether meetings can be delayed to later in the year when the potential COVID-19 risk may be further reduced.
- The council might consider holding a remote meeting as late as possible in April so that councillors who are unable to attend face-to-face meetings will have as much time as possible before disqualification by virtue of s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 becomes an issue.
- It may help the council's business continuity to implement (or review) a scheme of delegation. This would allow the clerk to make certain decisions for the council, which would be especially important if the council were unable to hold meetings due to COVID-19 risks. In reviewing/adopting a scheme of delegation the council should ensure there is clarity around which decisions are delegated and which are not, for how long the scheme of delegation is in place, and when the scheme of the delegation will end or be reviewed.

From May 2021, as face-to-face council meetings resume there will still be the risk to attendees of COVID-19 exposure. Councils should conduct a risk assessment in advance of a face to face meeting which should give consideration to what the council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public including:

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public
- Putting a one way system in place (additional security staff will be needed)
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart
- Ensuring everyone wears face masks
- Holding paperless meetings
- The sharing of papers should be discouraged and people should be asked to take the papers etc with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle them
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly
- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible (not possible in the WTC Council Chamber although the air-con system may be able to be altered to assist.)
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing – this may mean choosing a different venue to what the council used before e.g. Pavilion or sports centre.
- The council (or venue owner/operator) will need to identify the venue's maximum capacity in their risk assessment, taking into account the need for social distancing. Consider how the council will ensure this capacity is not exceeded and how it will manage the situation if more people wish to attend than capacity allows. For example, could meetings be live-streamed or could members of the public submit questions via email?

- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure. NB all venues in hospitality, the tourism and leisure industry, close contact services, community centres and village halls must have a **test and trace procedure**
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for **multi-purpose community facilities** and for **council buildings**. If the venue is run by the council then the council must take responsibility for this, otherwise, the council can ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government **safer workplaces guidance**

WTC staff will carry out a full risk assessment if and when needed, the above is to demonstrate the complexities of holding a face-to-face meeting to Councillors and is not intended to be discussed in detail at this point.

Managing staff:

- It would be advisable to inform the clerk and any other staff whose role involves supporting or attending council meetings, as soon as possible that the council will need to prepare to return to face to face meetings from May onwards. This will allow them to make the necessary preparations as described above, and also to allow time to engage with staff to alleviate any concerns they may have related to attending physical meetings again.
- Councils should consult with staff (ask for and consider their views to try and reach an agreement) about returning to work as part of their preparations for face to face meetings.
- The council must make the workplace (including council meetings) as safe as possible for staff, this includes undertaking a risk assessment, taking reasonable steps to reduce risks identified in the risk assessment, and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest Government **safer workplaces guidance**
- ACAS have produced useful **guidance for employers and employees** related to COVID-19, including advice on how to support staff to **return to the workplace** and how to manage situations where staff may be worried or not wish to return.

Government advice is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>

Appendix 7: Temporary Scheme of Delegation

1. Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides:
 - That a Council may delegate its powers (except those incapable of delegation) to a committee or an officer.
 - A Committee may delegate its powers to an officer.
2. Any delegation to a Committee or the Proper Officer shall be exercised in compliance with the Council's Standing Orders, any other policies or conditions imposed by the Council and within the law.
3. In an emergency the Proper Officer is empowered to carry out any function of the Council
4. Where officers are contemplating any action under delegated powers, which is likely to have a significant impact in a particular area, they should also consult the Members, and must ensure that they obtain appropriate legal, financial and other specialist advice before action is taken.

Delegation to the Clerk

As a temporary measure, to allow for effective decision making whilst Covid-19 restrictions and considerations are in place, the Clerk may be empowered to take any and all decisions recommend to them by the relevant Committee or Full Council. This includes:

- a) placing orders for any items already agreed by the Council by resolution
- b) responding to planning applications having consulted with Councillors
- c) making payments, including salary payments, for anything already agreed by the Council by resolution and in line with the limits set out in Financial Regulations
- d) arrange for the emergency repair of any council owned assets in consultation with Councillors

This empowerment does not affect the delegations already in place via Standing Orders or Financial regulations.

The Clerk may not take additional decisions that would normally be taken by a Committee or Full Council unless that Committee or Full Council has met in a meeting suitably convened under the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, and made available to the public to view (where not covered by confidentiality) and expressly agreed for that decision to be enacted via this temporary delegation.

The delegation scheme will automatically end when the Council returns to face to face meetings.

Full Council matters

The following items are reserved for Full Council decision only and cannot be delegated to an Officer.

- To appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in May each year
- To sign off the Governance Statement by 30 June each year
- To set the Precept
- To appoint a Clerk
- To make byelaws
- To borrow money
- To consider any matter required by law to be considered by Council

Appendix 8: Code of Conduct

The following letter was received from Mark Watkins, Deputy Monitoring Officer, at EHDC on 10th March 2021:

Dear colleague

Member Code of Conduct

On 30 January 2019, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (committee) published a report on local government ethical standards. The report follows a consultation by the committee in 2018 as part of its review of standards of behaviour by councillors. Please see the below link to the report.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777315/6.4896_CO_CSPL_Command_Paper_on_Local_Government_Standards_v4_WEB.PDF

The report made a number of recommendations to improve ethical standards and general governance in a local authority context. It also identifies 'best practice' for councils as a minimum standard for ethical practice. For the purposes of this letter, I draw your attention to two of these:

☐ **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

☐ **Recommendation No 20:** Section 27(3) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that parish councils must adopt the code of conduct of their principal authority, with the necessary amendments, or the new model code

You may be aware that East Hampshire District Council has recently reviewed and revised its code of conduct - see the below link.

<https://cdn.easthants.gov.uk/public/documents/EHDC%20Councillor%20code%20of%20conduct.pdf>

For the sake of completion I also provide a link to the associated complaints process.

<https://cdn.easthants.gov.uk/public/documents/Process%20for%20dealing%20with%20a%20complaint%20-%20EHDC%20Councillors.pdf>

Under the Localism Act 2011, much of the responsibility for standards in town and parish councils belongs to their principal authority; only a principal authority having the power to undertake a formal investigation and decision on an alleged breach of a parish council's code under section 28(6) of the Act.

The committee found that dealing with standards issues in parish councils can be onerous for Monitoring Officers in principal authorities. In the course of its evidence taking, the committee heard that the variation in parish codes within a principal authority area represents an additional burden on that authority when advising, investigating and adjudicating on code breaches.

They went on to consider the need to balance the autonomy of parishes with a recognition that ultimately the principal authority must continue to be responsible for investigating breaches. Although there are benefits of parishes being able to devise their own code, given the burden of this statutory obligation (moreover the confusion that often arises in the case of dual-hatted councillors) the committee decided that the costs of giving parish councils the option to adopt their own code of conduct, outweigh the benefits.

Although the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the committee, for the above reasons I ask that you discuss with and or invite your members to formally adopt East Hampshire District Council's new Member Code of Conduct as your own.

I look forward to working with you all this year and to hearing from you in due course on the request made of you in this letter.

Clerk's Comments

I have sent out, with the agenda pack, a PDF version of the Code of Conduct. Councillors should review this document prior to the meeting and decide whether they wish to adopt it. The Code will need to be amended so that it refers to Greatham Parish Council.