



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Meeting of: Noak Bridge Parish Council
Date: Wednesday 26th November 2025
Time: 7.00pm
Place: Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

Councillors to be present: M. Cottrell (Chairman), P. Daft (Vice-Chairman)
C. Bateman, J. Dowton, L. Gilliam, P. Hawkins and
T. Sargent

L Townend
Parish Clerk

19th November 2025

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive, consider and approve any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that they are required to disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests and Non-Registerable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraph 9 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members. Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting.

3. Minutes

To receive, approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting Parish Council meeting held on the 22nd October 2025, Minutes 99/2025 to 114/2025 inclusive ([attached](#)).

4. Public Participation Session

With respect to items on the Agenda and other matters of mutual interest.

5. Borough and County Councillor Reports

To receive update from District and Borough Councillors.

6. Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan

6.1 Referendum Version: Final Agreement

To note the Examiner's approval of the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan and Basildon Borough Council's decision to proceed to referendum which will be held on the 16th December 2025.

6.2 Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Publicity

To discuss the types of publicity, communication methods and timescales the Parish Council will use to inform residents about the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.

7. Finance

7.1 Accounts for Payment

To approve the accounts for payment to be made from the 1st November to the 30th November 2025. [Attached](#).

7.3 Bank Reconciliation

To receive and note the bank reconciliation to the 31st October 2025. [Attached](#).

7.4 Monthly Budget Report

To receive and note the monthly budget comparison to the 31st October 2025. [Attached](#).

7.5 Business Banking Arrangements

To agree to open an alternative, compliant, bank account. [Report attached](#).

7.6 Santander Bank Mandate

To receive an update from Cllr Sargent regarding removing an ex-councillor from the Santander Bank Account/s.

7.7 Informal Budget Meeting

To agree a date to hold the informal budget meeting.

8. Policies and Procedures

8.1 Policy Review Procedure

To agree how the council will review its policies and procedures going forward. Report attached.

8.2 Civility and Respect Pledge

To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge. [Report attached.](#)

8.3 Equality and Diversity, Dignity at Work and Grievance Procedure

To review and adopt an Equality and Diversity Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Procedure. [Report and draft policies/procedure attached.](#)

9. Planning

9.1 To consider planning applications detailed below and any planning applications published by Basildon Borough Council between the circulation of this agenda and the meeting.

9.1.1 25/00014/S211 – Section 211 - Adjacent to 55 New Waverley Road. T1 - T3 Leylandii fell and grind stumps. G1 - Crown lift to 1.5m and crown reduce by half height (3m). The application can be viewed [here](#).

9.1.2 25/00015/S211 – Work required to pollard 2 common maple and 1 hornbeam just outside boundary fence at 43 Durban Lane Laindon Essex SS15 4JU. The planning application can be viewed [here](#).

9.1.3 25/00016/S211 – Fell 1 x prunus at 43 Durban Lane Laindon Essex SS15 4JU. The planning application can be viewed [here](#).

9.1.4 25/01485/TPOBAS - T3 (Oak) of TPO/08/81 Fell and grind stump at 25 Bridge Street, Noak Bridge. The planning application can be viewed [here](#).

9.1.5 Basildon Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18.3 Consultation

To consider the draft Local Plan and agree the Council's formal response, reflecting local priorities and concerns. [Report attached.](#)

9.2 To note planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council

9.2.1 25/00012/S211 – Section 211 notice - Yew Tree and Cedar Crown reduction between 2.5 to 3 metres for both trees at 9 Sailing Green. **Closed.**

9.2.2 25/01107/TPOBAS - TPO/16/99 - 3 Oak Trees in the rear garden crown reduction and crown thinning by 1-2 metres at 31 Durban Lane. **Application permitted.**

9.2.3 23/01551/OUT – land to the south of Wash Road, hybrid planning application for up to 400 residential dwellings. **Application Granted**

9.2.4 25/01148/FULL – single story rear extension at 6 Bridgecote Lane Laindon Basildon Essex SS15 4BW. **Application Granted.**

10. Christmas Tree

To receive an update on a Christmas tree.

11. Environment

11.1 Handyman Tasks

To receive an update on agreed tasks and consider and prioritise newly notified tasks to be completed in December/January.

11.2 Surface of Children's Playground

To discuss potential refurbishment works. [Report attached.](#)

11.3 Pétanque Court Transfer Update

To receive an update from the advice sought from the NALC and consider the next steps. [Report attached](#)

11.4 No Fly Tipping Signs

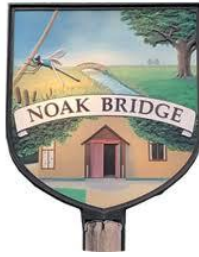
To receive an update on the installation of 'No Fly Tipping' signs. [Report attached.](#)

12. Correspondence

To note correspondence received.

13. Date of Next Meeting

To next Parish Council meeting will take place at 7pm on the 26th January 2026.



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Minutes

Held at Noak Bridge Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge SS15 4JS on

Wednesday the 22nd October 2025 @ 7.00pm

Present

Chairman: Cllr Mark Cottrell

Councillors: Cllr Paul Daft, Cllr Jacqui Dowton, Cllr Lynn Gilliam, Cllr Peter Hawkins, and Cllr Terri Sargent.

In attendance: Lynda Townend (Clerk) and 8 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

99/2025 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received as all Members were present.

100/2025 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or nonpecuniary interests by Members relating to any agenda items.

Cllr Hawkins declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda item 11.5 as a member of the Pétanque Club.

Cllr Sargent had previously declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in agenda items relating to the Pétanque Club as the Chairman of Noak Bridge Community Association.

Resolved: That the Declarations of Interest be noted.

101/2025 Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 24th September 2025, Minutes 82/2025 to 98/2025 inclusive.

Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

102/2025 Public Participation Session

A member of the public advised three lights were currently out in the underpass.

103/2025 Borough and County Councillor Reports

Cllr Sargent, as a Borough Councillor, provided an update on devolution and local government restructuring, including:

- Some of the proposed Unitary authorities are proposing to set up Neighbourhood Committees.
- Cllr Sargent will be attending a Teams Meeting on the subject which will include the future role of Parish Councils in the new structure.
- The new structure will result in a reduction of councillors.
- No new requests for works are being considered.
- Services could be offered to Parish Councils.
- Uncertainty remains over the 2026 elections due to concerns that their timing, one year before the new shadow council is elected, could prove disruptive. A final decision will be made by the Government.
- The new Mayor of Greater Essex will be elected in May 2027.
- A definitive decision on the number of Unitary authorities, and how they are made up, is expected by March 2026.

The Council agreed to bring agenda item 11.2 forward for discussion at this point in the meeting.

104/2025 Coppice Lane Pond

The Council discussed the condition of Coppice Lane Pond following a proposal provided by a Member of the Friends of Noak Bridge, for the Parish Council to part-fund essential improvement works. Cllr Sargent, in her capacity as a Borough Councillor advised Basildon Borough Council (BBC), as the owner of the pond, is aware of concerns with the pond and is developing plans to deepen areas and remove silt to make it more sustainable. Works are expected to begin shortly. BBC has also indicated that, due to limited budgets and the number of ponds across the borough, not all sites will continue to be maintained.

It was agreed that the pond is an important village feature that should be preserved.

Resolved: That the Parish Council agreed in principle to contribute up to £3,000 or 50% of the total cost (whichever is lower), subject to Basildon Borough Council also contributing to the works.

It was further agreed that the Council will write to Basildon Borough Council confirming its commitment and requesting details of how the contribution will be used and the overall cost of the project.

A member of the public left the meeting at 19:38.

105/2025 ABLC Meeting

Cllr Cottrell provided an update from the recent ABLC meeting.

- Reported that a new Clerk, Mel Linwood from Great Burstead and South Green Parish Council, has been appointed.
- Shotgate has received the award for *Little Village of the Year*.
- Christmas markets were discussed.
- Wickford Town Council provided an update on their collaborative work with Basildon Council's Pride Team for handyman services.
- The proposed Bowers Gifford Half Marathon in Pound Lane was noted.
- Continuing building development remains a key topic of concern across all parishes.
- The Highways Committee has come to a standstill due to the impending changes to councils with devolution and Government reorganisation.
- Forthcoming Liaison Meeting dates were confirmed as 20 November 2025, 15 January 2026, and 19 March 2026.

The update was noted.

106/2025 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Sargent provided an update on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan, advising

- The Examiner's report has been received, reviewed, and fact-checked by the consultant.
- All recommended changes have been accepted, and the plan will now be updated accordingly.
- The referendum is expected to take place before Christmas or early January.
- Once adopted, the plan will become a material consideration in all future planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council.
- All future costs, relating to the referendum and publication of the plan will be met by Basildon Borough Council.
- The Parish Council will be responsible for informing residents about the plan, its benefits, and the importance of voting.

The Council recognised many residents did not thoroughly understand what a Neighbourhood Plan was and how it would benefit Noak Bridge. They discussed the importance of ensuring residents are well informed about the Neighbourhood Plan

and the need to participate in the forthcoming referendum. It was suggested that this could include distributing a newsletter and a very simple, clear, and easy to understand leaflet outlining the key benefits in bullet point form, together with a door-to-door awareness campaign.

Cllr Sargent further advised the council that the Neighbourhood Plan began in 2017 with a mandate from the Parish Council. She felt it was well documented and consulted on by the steering group. The Neighbourhood Plan was delayed during Covid in 2020/2021 when consultation events had to be cancelled. Newsletters produced in the intervening period contained information on how the Plan was being developed and the consultations held.

Cllr Dowton left the meeting at 19:58 and returned at 20:00

The update was noted.

107/2025 Finance

107/2025/01 Accounts for Payment

The Clerk advised an additional invoice from Bluestone Planning had been paid on the 27th September being for the costs for reviewing the Examiners initial report.

The amount of the invoice totalled £2,146.20 including VAT.

The Council received and approved the following accounts for payment:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
27/09/2025	Bluestone Planning	Neighbourhood plan examiner's response	1,788.50	357.70	2,146.20
25/09/2025	At Last Events	Christmas lights interim invoice	4,975.00	995.00	5,970.00
11/10/2025	Helping Hand	Children's litter pickers	54.17	10.83	65.00
12/10/2025	Amazon	Mugs for litter pickers	124.80	25.05	149.85
13/10/2025	Amazon	Hi-Vis vests for litter pickers	63.30	12.60	75.90
22/10/2025	NBCA	Hall hire for council meeting	50.00	-	50.00
25/10/2025	L Townend	October salary and expenses	741.09	-	741.09
25/10/2025	Nest Pension	October pension costs	62.70	-	62.70
25/10/2025	HMRC	October PAYE costs	251.86	-	251.86
TOTAL:					£9,512.60

Resolved: That the accounts for payment for September and October be approved.

107/2025/02 Bank Reconciliation

The council **received and noted** the bank reconciliation report to the to the 30th September 2025.

107/2025/03 Monthly Budget Sheet

The Council **received and noted** the budget comparison to the 30th September 2025. It was highlighted the council had spent £33,763.65 to date representing 25% of the annual expenditure budget.

107/2025/04 2026/27 Budget Planning

The Council discussed the planning process for the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved: that an informal meeting be held to draft the budget prior to formal approval by the Council at its January 2026 meeting.

107/2025/05 Removal of Ex-Councillor as a Signatory on the Santander Account

It was noted that an ex-councillor remained as a signatory on the Santander account.

Cllr Sargent advised that a change of mandate form had been received, which needed to be completed and submitted to Santander.

It was noted that the contact details of the ex-councillor were held by a member of the public, who offered to provide them to the Council. The contact details of the ex-councillor were not discussed in public, only who held them.

Resolved: that Cllr Sargent will complete and submit the necessary forms to Santander to remove the ex-councillor as a signatory.

108/2025/01 Planning

The Council considered the following planning applications:

108/2025/01/01 - 25/0171/OUT – amendments to planning application for up to 300 residential dwellings at Wash Road.

Resolved: that the council continues to object to this application and will resubmit the original objection letter requesting that the planning authority take full account of the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan.

108/2025/01/02 - 25/01254/FULL – Retention of installation of two external air conditioning condenser units to the side and rear elevations (retrospective) at 11 Sailing Green, Noak Bridge.

Resolved: that the Council objects to this application on the grounds that the noise and disturbance caused by the units adversely affect neighbouring properties, they are visually intrusive and detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the exposed mechanical equipment on the side and rear elevations which are visible from the street, fail to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

108/2025/02 To note planning decisions made by Basildon Borough Council:

108/2025/02/01 – 25/01147/TPOBAS – Oak of T5 – YPO/09/98 – crown reduction of 3m height and a 2m lateral crown reduction at Handley Court, Handleys Chase, Noak Bridge. **APPLICATION PERMITTED.**

108/2025/02/02 – 25/01035/FULL – Proposed outbuilding to create staff room and storage area at Noak Bridge Primary School, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge. **PERMISSION GRANTED.**

108/2025/02/03 – 25/00007/S211 – H1 mixed hedge cut back at 30 Durban Lane, Noak Bridge. **CLOSED.**

108/2025/02/04 – 25/00263/FULL – Single storey side extension to existing commercial unit and reconfiguration of front elevation fenestration at Willow Park, Wash Road, Laindon. **GRANTED.**

108/2025/03 Ramsden Bellhouse Parish Council Regulation 14 Consultation

Resolved: that the Clerk will formulate and submit a supportive response on behalf of the Council.

109/2025 Christmas 2025

109/2025/01 Christmas Tree

The Clerk advised that quotes were still outstanding but indicative costs had been provided as follows:

- 10' tree – £300 + VAT
- 14' tree – £500 + VAT
- 18' tree – £700 + VAT

The Council also discussed a local supplier and agreed to contact them regarding supply and liaising with Peter Thomas to ascertain if he can install and remove the tree.

Resolved: that the item be referred to the November meeting for a final decision.

110/2025 Environment

110/2025/01 Handyman Tasks

The Clerk provided Members with a list of tasks which councillors had supplied for the handyman. A quote for the works was provided by Cllr Gilliam.

Cllr Sargent advised that Cllrs Ball and Buckley should be informed the parish council wished to clear up the parking circle by the shop in Coppice Lane as this was a Highway issue.

Resolved: that the Council agreed to spend £685 on the listed tasks, and the Clerk will notify Basildon Borough Council and Cllrs Ball and Buckley from Essex County Council that the Parish Council will be completing the works.

11/2025/02 Coppice Lane Pond

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

110/2025/03 Lights in the Underpass

The Clerk advised that all three malfunctioning lights have been reported to Essex County Council. She also noted that Cllr Buckley had been asked whether protective guards could be installed over the lamps to prevent ongoing damage. A response is expected shortly.

Cllr Daft left the meeting at 20:37.

Leaf litter and clearing was discussed.

Resolved: that Cllr Sargent would review locations where leaf build-up poses a risk to the public.

Resolved: that the clerk will seek a quote from Basildon Council for clearing the leaves in the underpass.

Cllr Daft returned to the meeting at 20:39

110/2025/04 Children's Playground Refurbishment Works

It was noted that a basket is broken and the bin needs replacing. Whilst the equipment is in good condition the playground surface is in poor condition and requires replacing.

It was suggested that the matter of the broken basket be raised with Basildon Council.

Resolved: that the clerk will seek quotes to replace the playground surface and present these at a future meeting.

111/2025/05 Pétanque Court Transfer Update

Cllrs Hawkin and Sargent had declared an 'Other Registerable Interest'.

The Clerk provided an update following the Council's resolution of 24 September 2025 (Minute 96/2025) to seek advice from the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) regarding the Parish Council's position on the pétanque court. The EALC requested further information on who funded and project-managed the installation. The Clerk confirmed that the court was funded and managed by the Parish Council.

Cllr Sargent, speaking as a Parish Councillor and Chairman of the Noak Bridge Community Association (NBCA), noted that the Parish Council had previously agreed at its July meeting to gift the pétanque court to the NBCA, subject to an agreement setting out responsibility for insurance, liability, management and maintenance. She further advised that the NBCA had not been informed of the Section 111 asset transfer prior to that decision being made, and had since declined the offer as they were content with the existing arrangement. The NBCA, a registered charity with responsibility for maintaining the village hall and other commitments under its lease, did not wish to take on the additional insurance and liability for the court.

Members noted that the pétanque court is an asset of the Parish Council, which therefore retains ultimate responsibility and liability, though it currently has no operational input.

It was agreed that advice from the EALC is required before any further action is considered.

4 members of the public left the meeting at 21:06

112/2025 Policies and Procedures

112/2025/01 Complaints Policy

Members received an updated draft Complaints Policy.

Resolved: that the updated Complaints Policy be adopted and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

112/2025/02 Grant Funding Policy

Members received and considered a draft Grant Funding Policy.

Resolved: that consideration of the policy be deferred to the next meeting, with Cllr Sargent providing the Clerk with suggested amendments.

Cllr Dowton and Cllr Gilliam left the meeting at 21:10

112/2025/03 Health and Safety Policy

Members received a draft Health and Safety Policy.

Resolved: that consideration of the policy be deferred to the next meeting, with Cllr Bateman providing the Clerk with suggested amendments.

113/2025 Correspondence

The Clerk advised that the Rt Hon Richard Holden MP had emailed offering to attend a Parish Council meeting to provide an update on his work.

The Council agreed that this would be welcomed, and the Clerk will extend an invitation to him.

The Clerk advised an email had been received from Basildon Council advising they are satisfied with the proposal to hang Christmas lights in the trees by the school and pond on Coppice Lane, provided the Arboricultural check comes back positive.

114/2025 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will be held on the 26th November 2025.

With no further business the meeting closed at 21.15

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____

Accounts for Payment

Accounts for
Payment

For authorisation on

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
24/11/2025	VCS Websites	Website repair	30.00	-	30.00
24/11/2025	L Townend	November salary	679.72		679.72
24/11/2025	L Townend	November expenses	47.06		47.06
24/11/2025	L Townend	November expenses	27.40		27.40
22/12/2025	HMRC	November PAYE costs	252.73		252.73
24/11/2025	Nest Pension	November pension costs	62.70	-	62.70
26/11/2025	NBCA	Hall hire 26 November 2025	50.00	-	50.00
TBC	Printing costs	Referendum publicity & newsletter	928.00	185.60	1,113.60
TOTAL:					£ 2,263.21

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Bank Reconciliation

	Actual	Estimate
Bank Balance as at	29.10.2025	30.11.2025
Current Account	£ 33,037.15	£ 31,092.17
Business Saving Account Santander	£ 18,001.16	£ 18,001.16
Business Saving Account Metro	£ 71,960.29	£ 71,960.29
Unity Trust Bank	£ 85,000.00	£ 85,000.00
Total:	£ 207,998.60	£ 206,053.62
Less Unpresented cheques		
HMRC Costs	£ 251.86	£ 504.59
Coppice Lane Pond		£ 3,000.00
Nest pension		£ 62.70
Total of unpresented cheques	£ 251.86	£ 3,567.29
Net Bank Balances as at	£ 207,746.74	£ 202,486.33
CASH BOOK		
Balance	£ 202,631.11	£ 202,631.11
Plus Receipts Current account	£ 44,891.30	£ 44,971.30
Plus Receipts Bus. Saving account	£ 1,060.97	£ 1,060.97
Plus Receipts Bus. Sav. Metro Account	£ 348.69	348.69
Plus Receipts Unity Trust Bank	£ -	£ -
Total	£ 248,932.07	£ 249,012.07
Less Payments	£ 41,185.33	£ 46,525.74
Grand Total	£ 207,746.74	£ 202,486.33
Difference	£ -	£ 0.00

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<u>NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL</u>		
<u>Bank Reconciliation</u>		
Month		31 October 2025
Balance per bank statements		
Santander Business Account	(Cashbook 1)	£33,037.15
Santander Business Savings Account	(Cashbook 2)	£18,001.16
Metro Business Savings	(Cashbook 3)	£71,960.29
Unity Trust Bank 12 Month Deposit Account	(Cashbook 4)	£85,000.00
	TOTAL IN BANK	£207,998.60
Monthly activity	Santander Business Account (Cashbook 1)	
Opening Balance brought forward September 2025		£20,292.61
Less Payments for October		£8,017.43
Plus Receipts for October		£20,761.97
Un-presented/unreconciled cheques		
		£33,037.15
	Santander Business Savings Account (Cashbook 2)	
Opening Balance brought forward September 2025		£18,001.16
Less Payments for October		£0.00
Plus Receipts for October		£0.00
Un-presented/unreconciled cheques		£0.00
		£18,001.16
	Business Account (Cashbook 3)	
Opening Balance brought forward September 2025		£71,914.48
Less Payments for October		£0.00
Plus Receipts for October		£45.81
Un-presented/unreconciled cheques		£0.00
		£71,960.29
	Business Account (Cashbook 3)	
Opening Balance brought forward September 2025		£85,000.00
Less Payments for October		£0.00
Plus Receipts for October		£0.00
Un-presented/unreconciled cheques		£0.00
		£85,000.00
	CLOSING BALANCE	£207,998.60
	Difference	£0.00
Member/Person	Signature	Date
Clerk / RFO		
Chairman		

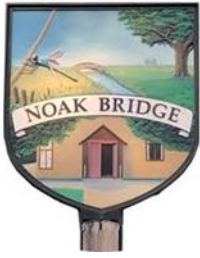
Monthly Budget Report

NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL	MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT
Month	Oct-25

INCOME	Budget	Actual (to date)	Variance (+/-)
Precept	£41,319.68	£41,276.54	-£43.14
LCTS Grant	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
CIF Grant	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Interest	£0.00	£1,409.66	£1,409.66
Event Income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£123.70	£0.00
- VAT reclaim 08/04/2024	£3,511.00	£3,491.06	-£19.94
- VAT reclaim	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
- VAT reclaim			
INCOME TOTALS	£44,830.68	£46,300.96	£1,470.28

EXPENDITURE	Budget	Total spent to 31/10/25	Variance (+/-)	Percentage spent	Expenditure in month
<u>Staff Costs</u>					
Salaries	£10,215.00	£4,751.01	£5,463.99	47%	£680.32
Tax & Employer NI	£1,970.00	£2,183.48	-£213.48	111%	£251.86
Pension	£500.00	£375.22	£124.78	75%	£62.70
Payroll	£300.00	£84.00	£216.00	28%	£0.00
Home allowance, Travel & Costs	£500.00	£297.49	£202.51	59%	£33.57
Training inc. travel	£2,000.00	£120.00	£1,880.00	6%	£0.00
Office equip & stationery	£1,000.00	£250.74	£749.26	25%	£27.20
<u>General Costs</u>					
Computer & Other Digital Equipment	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0%	£0.00
Fixed asset maintenance	£2,000.00	£904.00	£1,096.00	45%	£0.00
Telephone & Internet	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	#DIV/0!	£0.00
Elections/By-election	£2,500.00	£0.00	£2,500.00	0%	£0.00
Professional fees	£2,000.00	£25.00	£1,975.00	1%	£0.00
Hall Hire	£1,000.00	£275.00	£725.00	28%	£50.00
Insurance	£1,200.00	£931.19	£268.81	78%	£0.00
Subscriptions	£1,000.00	£1,090.50	-£90.50	109%	£0.00
Councillor Training	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	0%	£0.00
Audit Fees	£750.00	£390.00	£360.00	52%	£0.00
Publications/newsletters	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	0%	£0.00
CCTV & Security	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	0%	£0.00
VAT		£2,785.75	-£2,785.75	#DIV/0!	£1,053.42
<u>Community Support</u>					
Community Events Support	£1,500.00	£2,271.01	-£771.01	151%	£292.11
Kings Meni Bridge	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0%	£0.00
Kings Coronation	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0%	£0.00
Community Grants Awards (small)	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	0%	£0.00
Community Lights Project	£4,700.00	£4,975.00	-£275.00	106%	£4,975.00
Support Grants	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	0%	£0.00
<u>Projects</u>					
Parish Plan	£5,000.00	£0.00	£5,000.00	0%	£0.00
D Day (from reserves) VE Day	£5,000.00	£250.00	£4,750.00	5%	£0.00
Contingency earmarked (from reserves)	£10,000.00	£0.00	£10,000.00	0%	£0.00
Community Projects earmarked (from reserves)	£30,000.00	£16,004.44	£13,995.56	53%	£0.00
Community Projects Play Area earmarked (from reserves)	£25,000.00	£0.00	£25,000.00	0%	£0.00
Environmental Maintenance (From Reserves)	£10,000.00	£480.00	£9,520.00	5%	£0.00
Neighbourhood Plan (funded from reserves)	£10,000.00	£2,746.00	£7,254.00	27%	£0.00
EXPENDITURE TOTALS	£136,235.00	£41,189.83	£95,045.17	30%	£7,426.18

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 7.5

Business Banking Arrangements

Background Information

The Council currently holds two business bank accounts. The primary account, the Santander Business Account, has been in place for many years and is the account into which the precept is paid and from which most payments are made.

The Council's Financial Regulations set out clear requirements for the administration and authorisation of online payments, summarised below:

7.1 – Where internet banking arrangements exist, the Clerk/RFO must be appointed as the Service Administrator. The council's bank mandate must identify three councillors authorised to approve transactions, with a minimum of two councillors involved in any online approval process. No signatory may approve a payment to themselves.

7.4 – The Service Administrator will set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments, with copies of invoices, shall be circulated to members for approval.

7.6 – Two authorised councillor-signatories must check payment details against invoices before approving each transaction online.

7.10 – Payments may be made by BACS or CHAPS if authorised by two online signatories, with evidence retained and payments reported to council. Approval for BACS/CHAPS must be renewed by council resolution at least every two years.

The Internal Auditor, for both the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, recommended strengthening controls to ensure that all online transactions are verified by a second, separate councillor in line with the Council's own Financial Regulations.

To rectify the ongoing non-compliance with these regulations, the Council agreed to open a new business bank account with Metro Bank, which offers online payment facilities.

At the Council meeting on 24th September 2025 (Minute 91/2025/01), it was resolved that the Clerk be added to the Metro Bank account as a Service Administrator to view the account and set up payments for authorisation by two councillors, thereby ensuring compliance.

When the Clerk attended Metro Bank on 22nd October 2025, it confirmed that this mandate structure is only possible if the Council upgrades to a Business Online Plus account. This upgraded account carries a charge of £5 per user per month, which for four users (the Clerk plus three councillor signatories) equates to an ongoing monthly fee of £20. The Council's current Metro account is free.

The Clerk has therefore investigated alternative business accounts which:

- allow dual online authorisation of payments
- permit the Clerk to act as Service Administrator, and
- are compliant with the Financial Regulations.

A summary of these account options is included overleaf for members' consideration.

After reviewing the options, the Clerk recommends that the Council opens a new account with Unity Trust Bank (T1 Account) because:

1. It fully meets the Council's requirements for dual authorisation and enables the Clerk to act as Service Administrator.
2. It offers online banking functionality consistent with the Council's Financial Regulations.
3. It charges a flat £6 per month, with no additional transaction fees, providing a predictable and cost-effective solution.
4. It is specifically designed for not-for-profit organisations and parish councils, meaning processes for compliance and governance are straightforward.
5. The Council is an existing customer so account opening will be straightforward.
6. It avoids the higher costs associated with Metro Bank and the complexity of additional fees with the Lloyds account.

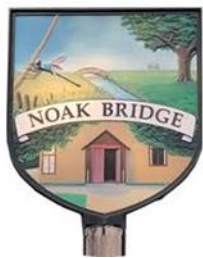
Recommendation

To ensure compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and internal audit recommendations, it is recommended that the Council:

1. **Considers** the account options researched and presented by the Clerk and **resolves** to open a new business bank account with a provider offering the correct dual-authorisation mandate and the ability to appoint the Clerk as Service Administrator.
2. **Agrees** to transfer the balance from the Metro Bank account into the new account once operational.
3. **Confirms** which three councillors will be signatories on the account.
4. **Continues using the Santander Business Account** until the new account is fully set up and operational.
5. **Resolves** to use the new account for all debit and credit transactions once the account is operational.

Provider	Lloyds	Metro Bank	Unity Trust Bank
Account Name	Community Account	Business Online Plus	T1 Account
Dual Authorisation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Online Banking	Yes	Yes	Yes
Existing Customer	No	Yes	Yes
Monthly account fee	£4.25 each month	£5/user = £20	£6.00
Available to	Non-profit making clubs, societies, organisations. Less than £250,000 paid into the account every 12 months	Customers with an existing Business Current Account	Customers with turnover under £100K
Credit Interest	None	None	None
Charges			
Electronic payments in	Free	Free	Free
Electronic payments out	First 100 a month are free. £0.10 each after that	Free	Free
Cash paid in – Direct	£0.75 for every £100	None	None
Cash paid in – Immediate Deposit Machine	£0.42 for every £100	None	None
Cash payments out	£0.75 for every £100	None	None
Cheque paid in – Direct	£0.50	None	None
Cheque paid in – Immediate Deposit Machine	£0.42	None	None
Cheque paid out	£0.50	None	None

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 8.1

Policy Review Procedure

Background Information

At the Council meeting in May 2025 (Minute 64/2025/3), it was resolved that a rolling review of council policies and procedures would take place, with three to four policies considered per month throughout the year.

Since that resolution:

- July 2025: IT Policy adopted; Freedom of Information Publication Scheme updated.
- September 2025: Retention and Disposal Policy updated; Appraisal Policy adopted.
- October 2025: Updated Complaints Policy adopted. Adoption of the Health and Safety Policy and Grant Funding Policy was deferred.

Following the October meeting, Cllr Sargent raised concerns about insufficient time to review draft policies, asserting her role as lead councillor on policy matters.

The Council employs a qualified Clerk who has successfully passed the CiLCA qualification, modules of which include policy review, drafting, and governance. This qualification ensures that policies are prepared in line with statutory requirements, good practice, and the needs of a small parish council.

As of November 2025, the Council's spreadsheet records indicate that:

- Total policies, risk assessments, and terms of reference: **34**
- Newly adopted or reviewed in the past year: **12**
- Remaining requiring review: **22**

Without a clear, agreed procedure, delays, miscommunication, and disagreement over policy review are likely to continue.

Summary

A formal Policy Review Procedure would provide clarity on:

- How policies are circulated to councillors for comment.
- Timeframes for review prior to meetings.

- Responsibilities for proposing, reviewing, and adopting policy updates.
- Avoiding repeated email exchanges or ad hoc requests that can cause confusion and delay decision-making.

Suggested Procedure for Council Consideration:

1. Rolling Review Schedule:

- Adopted from the May 2025 resolution: three to four policies reviewed per month until all policies are up to date.
- A published schedule, visible to all councillors, ensures transparency.

2. Policy Circulation:

- Draft or revised policies to be emailed to all councillors at least **three weeks before the relevant council meeting**.
- Emails to clearly request feedback or suggested amendments within a defined timeframe (e.g., **two weeks before the meeting**).

3. Lead Councillor Role:

- The lead councillor provides proposed changes or guidance, but all councillors are entitled to comment.
- The lead councillor should respond within the agreed review period; if no response is received, the Clerk may proceed to include the policy on the agenda with existing drafts.

4. Clerk Responsibilities:

- The Clerk, will draft, circulate, and manage the review of policies in line with statutory requirements and council priorities.
- The Clerk will maintain a central spreadsheet of all policies and core documents showing review dates and adoption dates to track progress and ensure compliance.

5. Agenda and Adoption:

- Policies are formally considered and adopted (or deferred) at council meetings, with all comments recorded in the minutes.
- Deferred policies return on the agenda for future meetings as per the rolling schedule.

6. Communication:

- Councillors are encouraged to limit ad hoc email discussions about policies to essential clarifications. Detailed discussions and decisions should take place at council meetings.

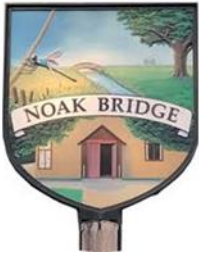
This procedure ensures a **structured, transparent, and consistent approach** to policy review, reduces email back-and-forth, and ensures policies are updated efficiently while giving councillors sufficient time to consider drafts.

Recommendation

That the Council:

1. **Agrees the above Policy Review Procedure** to be applied to all current and future council policies and procedures.
2. **Approves the rolling review schedule** for outstanding policies.
3. **Authorises the Clerk** to maintain a central policy register and schedule updates accordingly.

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 8.2

Civility and Respect Pledge

Background Information

Definition of Civility and Respect Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), in partnership with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and One Voice Wales (OVW), has developed the Civility and Respect Pledge to encourage local councils to adopt and maintain high standards of behaviour and respectful working practices.

By signing up to the civility and respect pledge the Council demonstrates it is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Signing up is a simple process, which requires councils to register and agree to the following statements:

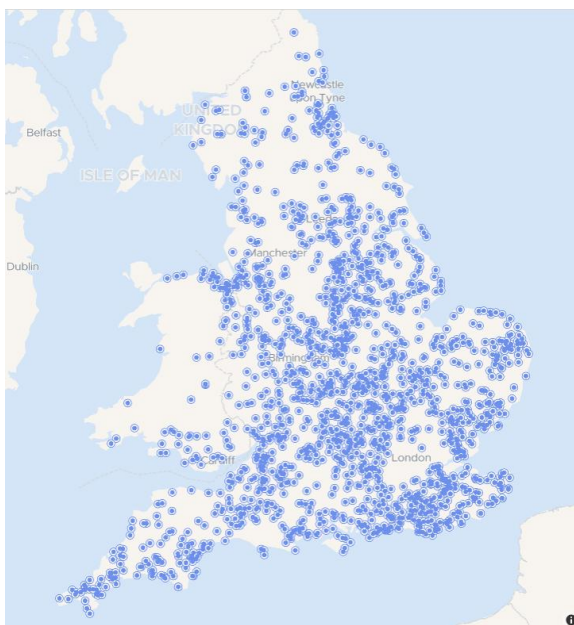
Statement	Tick to Agree
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff	
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors	✓
Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early	

stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme.	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	

Once signed up to the pledge the council will show on the NALC tracker and mapping tool.

At present 1,894 councils have signed up to the pledge

Civility and Respect Pledge Map



Civility and Respect Pledge Counter



Further information on the pledge can be found on the NALC website: [Civility and Respect Pledge](#)

Recommendation

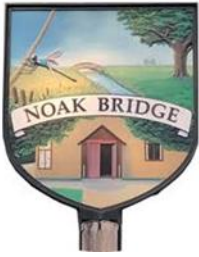
It is recommended that the Council:

By signing the Civility and Respect Pledge, Noak Bridge Parish Council would formally commit to:

1. Upholding high standards of conduct in all council activities.
2. Promoting a culture of civility and respect between councillors, staff, and the public.

3. Taking appropriate action where behaviour falls below expected standards.
4. Implementing policies, training, and governance measures that support these commitments.

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 8.3

Equality & Diversity and Dignity at Work Policies and Grievance Procedure

Background Information

Cllr Sargent emailed the Clerk to request the NALC model Equality & Diversity Policy be the next policy to be reviewed by the Council.

The policy presented is the official **NALC model policy**, with only minimal tailoring to reflect Noak Bridge Parish Council's name and structure. Because it is a model policy drafted to ensure legal compliance with the **Equality Act 2010** and best practice for local councils, no further amendments are recommended.

In reviewing the model policy, it refers to both a Dignity at Work Policy and a Grievance Policy. These two policies are necessary companions to ensure that the Council can meet the standards and processes referenced within the Equality & Diversity Policy. Without them, the Council would lack the procedures required to address complaints, harassment, bullying, or equality-related concerns effectively or lawfully.

Accordingly, a Dignity at Work Policy and a Grievance Policy have been drafted to align with NALC/SLCC guidance, employment law, and the ACAS Code of Practice. Together, these three policies form a coherent framework that supports good governance and legal compliance.

In addition, the Dignity at Work Policy refers to the Civility & Respect Pledge to be considered as a separate agenda item

Together, the Equality & Diversity Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Grievance Policy, and the Civility & Respect Pledge form a coherent and robust governance framework for the Council.

Summary

- Equality & Diversity Policy — NALC model policy, minimally tailored, legally compliant, and recommended without further amendment.
- Dignity at Work Policy — required to support the Equality & Diversity Policy and ensure appropriate standards of behaviour.

- Grievance Policy — ensures the Council has a clear, fair procedure for addressing concerns, in line with ACAS guidance.

All three policies work together to ensure:

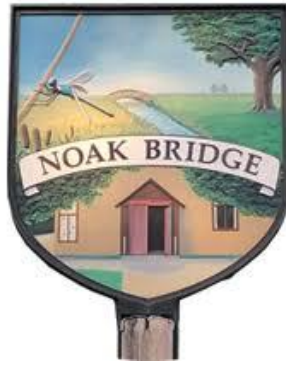
- compliance with the Equality Act 2010,
- clear expectations for councillors, staff, contractors, and the public,
- legally compliant processes for raising and handling concerns,
- support for a respectful, safe, and inclusive working environment.

Recommendation

That the Council adopts the following policies:

1. Equality & Diversity Policy
2. Dignity at Work Policy
3. Grievance Policy

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Noak Bridge Parish Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1			

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Our commitment

Noak Bridge Parish Council (the council) is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.

This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity)

that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they don't, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract

variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, sex/gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

Dignity at work

The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

People not employed by the council

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council.

You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council who will take appropriate action.

Training and prevention

The council will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. The council will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing information with other branches of the business.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held

personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

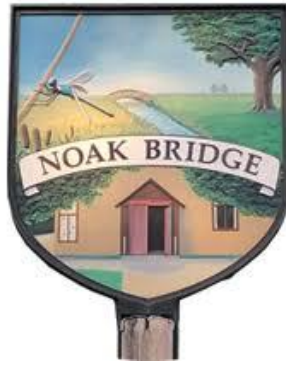
The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the council will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed; the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring . If changes are required, the council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time and at least every three years unless a change in legislation occurs beforehand.



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Dignity at Work Policy

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1			

1. Introduction

1.1 Noak Bridge Parish Council believes that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect when carrying out council business.

1.2 The Council expects all councillors, the Clerk, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public to act politely, courteously, and professionally at all times.

1.3 The Council has signed the NALC and SLCC Civility and Respect Pledge, confirming our commitment to creating a positive, safe, and respectful environment where harassment, bullying, and discrimination are not tolerated.

1.4 This policy explains what to do if anyone feels they are being treated inappropriately and how the Council will respond.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a culture of civility, respect, and inclusion in all council activities.
- Prevent bullying, harassment, and victimisation.
- Provide a clear process for raising and resolving concerns promptly and fairly.

2.2 The emphasis of this policy is on early resolution and mediation wherever possible, rather than on adversarial or punitive action.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to:

- The Clerk (as the Council's only employee).
- All Parish Councillors.
- Contractors, volunteers, and members of the public who come into contact with the Council.

3.2 Complaints about other employment matters will be dealt with under the Council's Grievance Policy.

3.3 The Council will take appropriate action if its employee or councillors are bullied or harassed by anyone connected with council work.

4. Expected Standards of Behaviour

4.1 Everyone working for or with the Council must:

- Treat others with courtesy and kindness.
- Listen to and respect different opinions.
- Avoid raising voices, personal criticism, or disrespectful comments.
- Use social media and written communication responsibly and politely.
- Follow the Councillor Code of Conduct, Equality and Diversity Policy, and this policy at all times.

4.2 Bullying, harassment, or any behaviour that makes others feel intimidated, humiliated, or offended will not be tolerated, whether it happens face-to-face, in meetings, by phone, by email, or online.

5. What Is Bullying and Harassment?

5.1 Bullying means offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour that misuses power or undermines, humiliates, or causes distress to another person.

5.2 Harassment means unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (such as age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation) that violates a person's dignity or creates a hostile environment.

5.3 Examples include:

- Spreading rumours or making insulting remarks.
- Shouting or persistent unjustified criticism.
- Excluding someone from conversations or meetings.
- Unwanted physical contact or suggestive comments.
- Offensive jokes, messages, or images.
- Abusing a position of authority.
- Inappropriate posts or comments on social media connected to the Council's work.

6. Our Approach

6.1 The Council aims to resolve issues quickly and informally wherever possible.

6.2 All complaints will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, and handled fairly.

6.3 No one will be victimised or treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.

6.4 Knowingly making false or malicious complaints may lead to disciplinary or Code of Conduct action.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
The Council	Adopts, reviews, and promotes this policy; leads by example.
Chairman	Acts as first point of contact for concerns; promotes respectful conduct at meetings.
Clerk	Implements the policy and reports any concerns to the Chairman or Personnel Committee.
Personnel Committee	Oversees formal processes and ensures fair and consistent handling of complaints
Councillors	Uphold the Code of Conduct and treat others with civility and respect
Contractors & Public	Expected to act respectfully towards councillors and staff

8. What to Do if You Have a Concern

(a) If the Clerk feels bullied or harassed by a Councillor

8.1 The Clerk should raise the concern with the Chairman or the Personnel Committee.

8.2 The Council will discuss what support or adjustments are needed (for example, avoiding contact with the councillor concerned).

8.3 If the matter appears to be a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council for investigation.

(b) If a Councillor feels bullied or harassed by another Councillor

8.4 The Councillor should raise the issue with the Chairman or seek advice from the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council.

8.5 Informal discussion, mediation, or training may be used to help resolve the issue.

(c) If a Councillor or Clerk feels bullied or harassed by a member of the public or contractor

8.6 Report the behaviour to the Chairman or Clerk.

8.7 The Council will decide how best to manage the situation, which may include limiting contact, refusing correspondence, or ending a contract.

9. Resolving Concerns

9.1 Informal Resolution

Many issues can be resolved quickly by explaining calmly why certain behaviour is upsetting or inappropriate.

Mediation by an independent person (for example, through the Essex Association of Local Councils) may be used to rebuild working relationships.

If informal action does not resolve the issue, or if the behaviour is serious, a formal process may be used.

9.2 Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Chairman.

If the complaint involves the Chairman, it should be sent to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

The matter will be dealt with under the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policies.

Complaints involving councillors that may breach the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council.

10. Confidentiality and Protection

10.1 All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible, and personal information will be managed in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

10.2 No one will suffer detriment or disadvantage for raising a concern in good faith.

10.3 Temporary changes may be made to working arrangements while a matter is under review to protect wellbeing.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee.

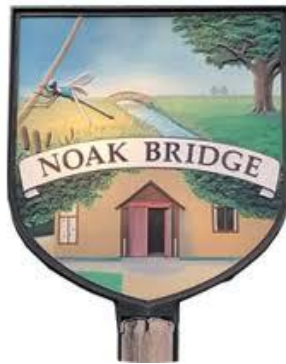
11.2 The Clerk will maintain a confidential record of any dignity-at-work concerns.

11.3 The Council will provide Civility and Respect or similar training for all councillors and new members as part of induction.

12. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Civility and Respect Pledge



Noak Bridge Parish Council

Grievance Procedure

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1			

1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure is based on and complies with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (2015) and takes into account the Equality Act 2010. It is designed to encourage good working relationships by addressing grievances quickly, fairly, and consistently.

1.2 The procedure applies to the Clerk as the Council's only employee. It may also guide councillors in raising concerns, except where a complaint relates to a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct (see section 1.7).

1.3 The Council will handle all grievances in accordance with equality law and treat employees fairly, regardless of any protected characteristic (such as age, disability, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation).

1.4 Employees raising a grievance in good faith will not be penalised. Malicious or knowingly false grievances may result in disciplinary action.

1.5 Employees have the right to be accompanied at any grievance or appeal meeting by a workplace colleague, trade union representative, or trade union official. The companion may present the case and confer with the employee but cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf unless agreed.

1.6 The Council will give reasonable notice of meetings, normally at least 10 working days, and any proposed changes to deadlines will be agreed with the employee.

1.7 If a grievance relates to a councillor's conduct under the Code of Conduct, the employee can raise it at the informal stage. If unresolved, the employee may contact the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council. Formal grievance stages cannot be used for Code of Conduct matters.

1.8 The Council has a duty of care to ensure a safe working environment and will take appropriate steps if a grievance involves safety concerns, bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

2. Informal Grievance Procedure

2.1 The Council encourages resolving grievances informally wherever possible, as quickly as possible.

Steps:

1. Raise the concern promptly with the Chairman or a member of the Personnel Committee.
2. Explain clearly what the grievance is and what outcome you hope for.
3. If the grievance concerns the Chairman, raise it with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.
4. If the grievance involves a councillor, informal discussion with their consent may be attempted.
5. Consider mediation if both parties agree, especially for issues involving communication breakdowns, bullying, or harassment.

2.2 The Council will aim to resolve the matter informally within 10 working days where possible.

3. Formal Grievance Procedure

3.1 If the grievance cannot be resolved informally and is not a Code of Conduct issue, it may be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

3.2 The Personnel Committee will appoint three members to hear the grievance and will select a Chairman from among them. Councillors directly involved in the grievance will not sit on the panel.

3.3 Investigation:

- The panel may appoint an investigator to gather facts before the grievance meeting.
- Investigation steps may include interviews with the employee, witnesses, councillors, or contractors, and review of relevant documents.
- The investigator reports only to the Personnel Committee.

4. Notification

4.1 The employee will normally receive written notice of the grievance meeting within 10 working days of submitting the formal grievance.

4.2 The notice will include:

- Names of the panel members and Chairman
- Date, time, and place of the meeting (normally within 25 working days)
- Right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, trade union representative, or trade union official
- Copy of this Grievance Procedure
- Information about witnesses (if applicable) and request for supporting evidence in advance
- Opportunity to request adjustments for health or accessibility needs

5. The Grievance Meeting

5.1 At the meeting:

- The Chairman introduces the panel to the employee
- The employee (or companion) presents the grievance and evidence
- Panel members may ask questions and clarify points
- Witnesses may be questioned if appropriate
- The employee (or companion) may summarise the case

5.2 The meeting may be adjourned if further investigation is required.

5.3 The panel's decision will be provided in writing within 5 working days, including:

- Outcome of the grievance
- Actions the Council will take (if any)
- Right to appeal

6. Appeal

6.1 If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, the employee may submit a written appeal to the Personnel Committee within 5 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal must state the grounds, such as:

- Failure to follow the grievance procedure
- Decision not supported by evidence
- Proposed action is inadequate
- New evidence has arisen

6.2 The appeal panel will normally consist of three councillors who were not involved in the original grievance panel. If insufficient members are available, the panel may include other councillors, but no one directly involved in the grievance.

6.3 The employee will receive written notice of the appeal meeting within 10 working days, and the meeting will usually take place within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal.

6.4 At the appeal meeting:

- Panel members are introduced
- Purpose of the meeting and potential outcomes are explained
- Employee (or companion) presents the grounds for appeal
- Panel may ask questions and review evidence

6.5 The appeal panel will issue a written decision within 5 working days. The decision is final.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 All grievance records, evidence, and discussions will be treated **confidentially** and shared only with those involved in the process.

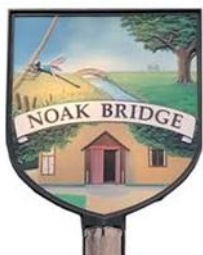
7.2 Records will be maintained in line with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.

8. Mediation

8.1 Mediation may be offered at any stage if appropriate, with consent from all parties. It can help resolve disputes without formal disciplinary action.

9. Related Policies

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy



AGENDA REPORT ITEM 9.1.5

Basildon Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18.3 Consultation

Background Information

Basildon Borough Council (BBC) Local Plan Regulation 18.3 Consultation is due to run from 28th November 2025 to 16th January 2026. This is the next stage in the development of the Local Plan and offers residents and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the Draft Local Plan.

BBC has outlined a communications plan to support this consultation, including:

- Encouraging residents to sign up to the Commonplace platform in advance of the consultation.
- Promoting completion of the consultation to ensure proportionate representation across the borough.
- Engagement through emails, social media, press releases, and newsletters.
- Hosting in-person events in early December, with further events if required, to support residents in giving feedback.
- Providing assistance at the Basildon Centre for residents needing help to access the consultation.

The Council is asked to consider the consultation content and formulate a response reflecting local priorities and views.

Summary

The consultation provides an opportunity for the Parish Council to:

- Comment on planning and development proposals affecting Noak Bridge and surrounding areas.
- Ensure that the views of local residents are considered by BBC.
- Identify key priorities or concerns regarding housing, infrastructure, and environmental considerations.
- Engage with the consultation through the Commonplace platform, written submissions, or by attending events if required.

The Council may wish to discuss and agree on key points or areas of focus to include in its formal response. A draft response template is shown below.

Documents relating to the Local Plan and consultation can be found at [Basildon Borough Council Draft New Local Plan](#).

Recommendation

That the Council:

1. **Notes** the Basildon Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18.3 Consultation and the associated communications plan.
2. **Considers** any issues, priorities, or local concerns to be included in a response.
3. **Agrees** to formulate and submit a formal response on behalf of the Council before the consultation closes on **16th January 2026**.

Suggested Draft Response Template to the Regulation 18.3 Consultation

Noak Bridge Parish Council – Response to Basildon Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18.3 Consultation

1. Introduction

Noak Bridge Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to Basildon Borough Council's Draft Local Plan under Regulation 18.3. The Council represents the interests of residents of Noak Bridge and surrounding areas.

2. General Comments

- Support/concerns regarding overall vision and objectives of the Local Plan.
- Importance of sustainable development and infrastructure provision.
- Ensuring local character, environment, and community facilities are protected.

3. Housing

- Comments on proposed housing allocations affecting the Parish.
- Considerations regarding housing density, design, and suitability for local needs.
- Opportunities for affordable housing or mixed-use development.

Fit with the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan

4. Transport and Infrastructure

- Impact of proposals on local traffic, road safety, and public transport.

- Need for improvements to local infrastructure to support growth.

5. Environment and Green Spaces

- Protection of natural habitats, parks, and watercourses.
- Concerns about flood risk, pollution, or loss of green belt/open spaces.

6. Community Facilities

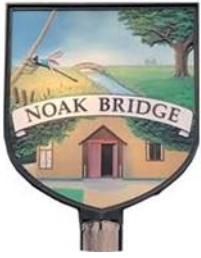
- Adequacy of schools, healthcare, play areas and other community services to meet growth.
- Opportunities to enhance local amenities for residents.

7. Other Local Priorities

- Any issues raised by residents or identified by the Parish Council.
- Suggestions for consultation engagement and community involvement.

8. Conclusion

Noak Bridge Parish Council requests that Basildon Borough Council consider the points raised above and ensures that the Local Plan reflects the needs, priorities, and well-being of the Parish and its residents.



AGENDA REPORT ITEM 11.2

Playground Surface Replacement – Update and Next Steps

Background Information

At the last Parish Council meeting held on the 22nd October 2025, councillors discussed the poor condition of the surface at the local playground. There was some uncertainty about whether quotes for replacement were required, as the playground equipment and surface are owned and maintained by Basildon Borough Council (BBC).

Following this, Rob Baker from Basildon Borough Council was contacted to clarify how the Parish Council might contribute towards replacing the surface, if agreed by the Council.

Summary of Response from Basildon Borough Council

- The Parish Council is welcome to contribute toward the cost of replacing the safer surfacing.
- BBC aims to make play areas as inclusive as possible, which may require full surfacing of the play area to ensure connectivity between all play elements.
- Glen Owers and his team at BBC are willing to work with the Parish Council on a project of this type.
- **Caution:** Section 106 funds may be identified for a full replacement of the playground. It is recommended to check with Glen once the project scope is agreed to ensure the Parish Council does not spend money on works that may be superseded.
- A meeting to discuss options in more detail can be arranged at Barleylands after Glen returns from leave on 18th November.

Final Consideration

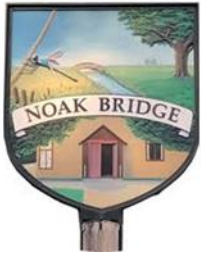
The Parish Council currently has an earmarked reserve of £25,000 for playground refurbishment, which could be applied to this project.

Recommendation

Councillors are asked to consider how they would like to proceed with the playground surface project, specifically:

1. Whether to engage with Basildon Borough Council and Glen Owers to scope the project.
2. How the Parish Council wishes to allocate its earmarked playground refurbishment funds.
3. Whether a working group or meeting should be arranged at Barleylands to discuss options in detail.

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 11.3

Pétanque Court Update and Next Steps

Background Information

The pétanque court, including fencing and gates, was installed in 2017 on land leased by the Noak Bridge Community Association (NBCA) from Basildon Council, funded and project-managed by the Parish Council. Since installation, the NBCA has independently maintained the court, and the Council has continued to list the asset on its Fixed Asset Register and provide insurance.

At its July 2025 meeting, the Council resolved to explore transferring ownership to NBCA, subject to their agreement to assume full responsibility for maintenance, liability, and insurance. NBCA has indicated that they prefer to continue with the current arrangements.

NALC Advice

The Council sought advice from solicitors at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding ownership and responsibility. The advice received states:

- Where a council installs an asset on land it does not own with permission or licence, the asset remains the property of the Council and should remain on the Council's Fixed Asset Register.
- If no evidence of permission exists, the installation could be interpreted as a gift to the landowner.
- Historical Council minutes indicate that Basildon Council provided consent for the asset to be installed on land leased by the NBCA. On this basis, the pétanque court remains a Council asset, and the Council retains responsibility.

Next Steps

If the Council remains minded to transfer ownership to the NBCA, it could re-engage with NBCA: again offering the asset formally as a gift but with supportive measures to reduce their potential burden. This could involve offering to contribute towards additional insurance costs associated with the asset.

Risk Management: In the meantime the Council should continue to list the asset on its Fixed Asset Register, maintain insurance and commence regular visual inspections to ensure the council performs its due diligence to ensure the court is safe for residents to use.

A suggested Risk Assessment template is shown at Appendix A and should be completed on a quarterly basis.

Recommendation

1. That Council notes the advice received from the solicitors at the NALC.
2. That Council implements quarterly visual risk assessments of the pétanque court to remain compliant with internal audit recommendations.
3. That Members consider whether to formally re-offer the asset to NBCA with supportive measures to assist them in taking ownership.

Appendix A

Monthly Visual Risk Assessment – Pétanque Court, Fencing and Gate/s

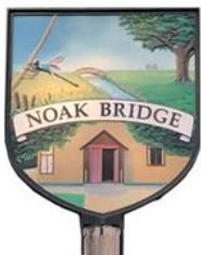
Location: Village Hall, Coppice Lane, Noak Bridge

Item	Check	Compliant (Yes/No)	Action / Notes
Court surface	Surface level and even, no large stones or debris		
Court surface	No significant cracks, holes, or erosion		
Court surface	Surface free of slippery substances (moss, algae, mud)		
Fencing	Posts secure and upright		
Fencing	Wire panels intact with no sharp edges		
Fencing	No gaps that could cause injury		
Gates	Hinges and latches function correctly		
Gates	Gate opens/closes smoothly, without obstruction		
General safety	No trip hazards around court (debris, uneven ground, other)		
General safety	Area clear of rubbish, broken glass, or other hazards		
General safety	Court free from vandalism or graffiti that could cause injury		
Surrounding area	Adequate access and egress, no obstructions		

Surrounding area	Signage (if any) in place and legible		
Item	Check	Compliant (Yes/No)	Action / Notes
Weather / environmental hazards	Drainage adequate, no standing water on court		
General	Any other hazards noted		
Inspector Notes/Observations			
Inspector Signature:			
Date:			

The completed inspection report should be returned to the Clerk at clerk@noakbridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk.

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AGENDA REPORT ITEM 11.4

CCTV & Fly Tipping Signs

Background Information

At the July 2025 council meeting, the Parish Council resolved that the Clerk would contact Basildon Borough Council (BBC) to investigate whether temporary or permanent CCTV could be installed at the rear of the gardens in New Waverley Road due to ongoing fly-tipping. BBC confirmed they have asked their enforcement team to review the three areas suggested - Abbots Court, New Waverley Road by the underpass and the entry to the ridge that runs parallel to South Wash Rd and New Waverley Road the access road between nos. 96 & 98 that leads to the rear of NWR and the ridge – and install cameras where suitable.

Following a resident request to the Parish Council to consider the supply and installation of “No Fly-Tipping” signs in key hotspot locations, the Clerk is seeking clarification from BBC on whether they are able to supply and/or install these signs. Should BBC be unable to do so, the Parish Council may consider purchasing signage itself.

The Parish Council does not hold the General Power of Competence; however, it may still fund the purchase of signs under s.137 Local Government Act 1972, provided the expenditure offers a commensurate benefit to the community in helping deter environmental crime.

Summary

The purchase of signage would be subject to:

- **Landowner consent:** Signs may only be installed on parish council land or on land owned by BBC or others with written permission.
- **Highways considerations:** Signs positioned near a highway must not obstruct visibility or resemble regulatory traffic signs. Essex Highways permission may be required if installed on highway land.
- **Effectiveness:** While parish-installed signs do not create enforcement powers, they can act as a visual deterrent and support ongoing attempts to reduce fly-tipping in known hotspots.

Indicative costs (dependent on material, size and reflectiveness):

- Rigid plastic sign 300 × 200 mm – approx. **£4.99 each**
- Rigid plastic sign 600 × 400 mm – approx. **£18.49 each**
- Bespoke metal reflective sign 400 × 500 mm – approx. **£40.00 each**

Should BBC confirm they are unable to provide or install signs, the Council may wish to consider purchasing two or more signs from within these cost ranges.

Recommendation

That the Council considers purchasing 'No Fly-Tipping' signs if BBC confirms they are unable to supply or install them and seeks the landowner's consent (where required) to install the signs in agreed locations.

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