

Ettington Parish Council

Induction Guide for Councillors

Adopted 10 April 2019

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NB Words highlighted in **yellow** indicate forms for you to complete and are attached; those highlighted in **green** are available on the Parish Council website or by request from the Clerk either in electronic or paper format; those highlighted in **red** are available on request from the Clerk

Welcome

Congratulations on your election or co-option and welcome to Ettington Parish Council.

You are now part of the democratic framework in the district of Stratford and county of Warwickshire, representing your community at the grass roots level.

This Guide is to help you through the early stages of working with council colleagues.

In order to take up council duties all parish councillors are required to complete the following forms which will be provided to you by the Clerk:

- **Declaration of Acceptance of Office** which must be completed as soon as you are elected or at least before you take your seat at the first meeting of the Council. If you are not present for that first meeting the Council may agree to allow you to make the declaration at a later date: and
- **Register of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.**

1 Introduction to the Council

Ettington Parish Council is made up of 9 Councillors who are elected to represent the parish of Ettington. The total electorate of the Parish as at December 2018 is 883 (Ettington 824 and Fulready 59).

The Council's main source of income is known as the 'precept' which is collected by Stratford District Council. From 1 April 2019 the annual amount payable (including a precept support grant of £80.00) is £34,880

Local Councils are an essential part of local democracy acting on behalf of community they represent by:

- Giving views, on behalf of the community, on planning applications and other proposals that affect their area;
- Providing services and undertaking projects and schemes to benefit local residents;
- Working in partnership with other bodies to achieve benefits for the parish;
- Alerting relevant authorities to problems that arise or work needing to be done.

1.1 Contact Information

Refer to **Contact Information**

The Clerk works from home and can be contacted by phone Monday to Friday between 9.00 – 1.00 or by arrangement at other times.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

It is helpful for all councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities (set out below) to avoid any misunderstanding.

Councillors bring different skills, have different attitudes and give different reasons for becoming a councillors but all need to work as an effective team with the Chairman as team leader.

The Clerk provides advice and implements the council's decisions. The Clerk who statutory title is 'proper officer' is answerable only to the Council acting as one body, the employer.

The Clerk also holds the statutory position of Responsible Finance Officer. Clerks are professional paid officers.

2.1 Councillors Duties

As a councillor you have the following duties which are set out in law:

- You must, within 28 days of taking office, sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, agree to abide by the council's adopted Code of Conduct, and register any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
- Attend meetings when summoned to do so and have sole responsibility for disclosing any pecuniary interests before an item is discussed.
- Inform the Clerk of any intended absences in order that it can be recorded and approved. If a member does not attend any meeting of the Council, Council Committee or Sub-Committee for six consecutive months he/she automatically ceases to be a member of the authority. If a member has special reasons for not being able to attend meetings there may be circumstances under which the council can extend the period. The council can only extend the period before the six months have elapsed.
- You are entitled to vote at meetings.
- You can resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman.

2.2 Councillors' Role

- To set the council's budget and thereby the precept
- Develop policy and make policy decisions
- Represent the community by protecting and promoting community interests
- Act as a custodian of the public purse
- Abide by the council's Code of Conduct and other Policies and Procedures
- Act collectively as employer.

2.3 Beware of What a Councillor Cannot Do!

A Councillor on his/her own cannot:

- Make a decision on behalf of the council
- Instruct the clerk in her duties
- Write to the press or use social media on council matters as if he/she is authorised to do so
- Represent the council as and wherever they wish
- Resign by walking out of a meeting (A resignation must be put in writing to the Chairman)

2.4 Role of the Clerk

The clerk is the professional officer employed by the council to provide advice and administrative support. The clerk prepares the council for taking decisions, before, during and after the meetings, implements decisions and protects the council as a corporate body. Responsibilities range across organising meetings and events, managing facilities and finance to promoting the council and public relations.

The 'qualified' clerk will have obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration as a minimum. *The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) provides a valuable support network together with advice.*

2.5 Role of the Chairman

The Council **must** have a chairman, responsible for ensuring that proper decisions are taken in council meetings, that meetings run smoothly and on time. The chairman ensures that all councillors have the opportunity to speak at meetings and that procedure is followed in accordance with Standing Orders. If, during the meeting, there is a tied vote the chairman can use a casting vote to decide the question.

The chairman can be the public face of the council representing the council in a civic capacity.

The chairman is elected at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, which is held in May of each year.

Though not required the Council also has a role of deputy to whom the above applies.

2.6 Role of the Council as a Whole

The council is a corporate body, a legal entity separate from that of its members. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole council. The council has been granted powers by Parliament including the important authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money.

Services can include traffic calming, community safety, street lighting, playing fields, rights of way, allotments, cemeteries, litter, war memorials, seats and shelters. Where asked to do so the Planning Authority will notify the council of any planning applications arising within the parish, upon which the council can comment.

The services currently undertaken by Ettington Parish Council include:

- Footway lighting
- Provision and maintenance of the playing field including equipment and seating
- Provision and maintenance of the Multi Use Games Area
- Provision and maintenance of the Football Pitch
- Provision and maintenance of bench in Fulready
- Planters at the entrances to Ettington village
- Use, care and maintenance of two notice boards (one in Ettington and one in Fulready)
- Provision and maintenance of parish council website
- Provision of grant funding
- Comment on notified planning applications
- Support for village businesses and community groups
- Liaison with community stakeholders

2.7 The Council as Employer

The Council has to deal with a range of employment issues which require clear and straightforward employment policies and procedures that help to deal with any issues quickly, fairly and consistently.

The Clerk is employed by the Council and answers to the Council as a whole. No one Councillor can act as line manager of the Clerk. Employment related policies include:

- Appraisal
- Grievance
- Disciplinary

The Clerk's Contract of Employment is based on the National Association of Local Council/Society of Local Council Clerks model document.

3.0 Councillors' Code of Conduct

Under the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, member of Parish Councils are required to register their and their partner's pecuniary interests in a register held by the Monitoring Officer of Stratford District Council within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member. Provisions in relation to Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests are enforced by criminal sanction that came into force on 1 July 2012. A copy of the register is available from the District Council for public inspection and is published on their website.

The Parish Council, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 Section 27, adopted a **Code of Conduct** which took effect on 14 March 2018 to promote high standards of behaviour by its members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council. The Code is based on the Nolan Principles of Public Office which include selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Members are asked to familiarise themselves with their obligations under the Code, what interests to declare and how to declare them, how to apply for a dispensation (**Application for Dispensation**) and what to do if they are offered gifts or hospitality (**Policy on Gifts and Hospitality**)

3.1 Things a Councillor Should Not Do

It is important for councillors to be aware that they must not:

- Bring their council or office into disrepute
- Misuse their official position to their own advantage or to the advantage of others
- Unduly influence any person who works for the council
- Stop somebody seeing or getting copies of documents they are allowed to have
- Misuse council resources or authorise their misuse, in particular for any party political purposes.

4.0 The Decision Making Process

Council meetings are where Councillors play their part as decision makers. They are formal events where the public and press have a right to observe how the Council operates, the exception being when sensitive matters are discussed such as legal, contractual or staffing matters. A resolution must be passed at the meeting that such matters be discussed 'in camera'.

Decisions are normally called 'resolutions' and are normally made by the full Council and are 'corporate decisions'. Decision making can be delegated to Committees where they exist and sometimes to the Clerk. Such delegations must be recorded in the minutes and/or Standing Orders.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting takes place in May and, in an election year (every four years) the Council must meet on or within 14 days following the fourth day after the day of the election. There must, by law, be at least 3 other Council meetings in the year and at Ettington there is a meeting every month on the second Wednesday **except** in August. The schedule is usually set at the beginning of the year but in an election year will be set at the Annual Parish Council or subsequent meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting takes place on any date between 1 March and 1 June inclusive. This is not a Council meeting, but is hosted by the Parish Council. It is an opportunity for parish electors to speak and set the agenda to consider local issues.

4.1 Powers and Duties

Parish Councils can take part in, and pay for, a wide range of activities that are allowed for by various Acts of Parliament. There is a useful reference list in **'The Good Councillors' Guide'** and is available online at www.nalc.gov.uk and www.walc.org.uk.

Unless General Power of Competence (see below) applies, Councils wishing to incur expenditure on doing something that is not legally specified via any of the various Acts of Parliament, have a 'Section 137' power (local Government Act 1972, s137). This allows the council to spend a certain amount on a service that benefits the community as a whole. The amount is calculated as £8.12 (2018-19 and is adjusted annually).

Under the Localism Act 2011 local councils are being encouraged to take over more services and have the right to challenge and bid for community assets. In addition, the General Power of Competence is a power of first resort that allows eligible parish councils in England to do 'anything that individuals generally may do'

The General Power aims to give councils more freedom to work together with others in new ways to drive down costs and increase their confidence to work creatively and innovatively to meet local people's needs.

To be eligible to use the General Power of Competence the two mandatory requirements are:

- Two-thirds of members must have been elected; and
- The Clerk must be qualified to Certificate in Local Council Association standard

And a resolution being made at a Parish Council meeting.

4.2 Meetings, Conduct of Business, Standing Orders

Rules about the way meetings must be run, some of which are set by legislation, are contained within the Council's **Standing Orders**.

Standing Orders set out the order of business, rules about debate, voting requirements, and the procedures for public participation. Members are asked to read Standing Orders to ensure they are aware of the protocol on the conduct of meetings. Ettington Parish Council Standing Orders are reviewed annually at each Annual Parish Meeting.

4.3 Council Meeting Agendas

At least three working days (excluding bank holidays and Sundays) before a meeting a public notice of the meeting will be placed on the Council's notice boards. The agenda and accompanying papers will be posted to the Council's website.

At the same time, the agenda and accompanying papers will be e-mailed to members with a 'summons' to attend. Topics requiring a decision cannot be added to the agenda after its issue. Hard copies of the agenda and accompanying papers can be sent to members on request.

The agenda is also sent by e-mail to the county and district Councillors for the parish together with the Community Centre Management Committee Secretary with an invitation to attend a present a report on their respective roles.

If you wish to raise an item for inclusion on the agenda, contact the Clerk with details at least 2 weeks before the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to set the agenda and as much information should be provided to members to ensure good decisions are made. Agenda items headed 'matters arising' or 'any other business' do not give sufficient information on which to base decisions and are not used. Councillors should not be expected to make decisions or decide on expenditure without sufficient warning, research or preparation.

Members are advised to either request a paper copy of the agenda/associated reports from the Clerk or print off a copy to bring to the meeting.

4.4 Helpful Suggestions for Meetings

Agenda and Reports

- Upon receipt read the agenda and associated reports to identify key items
- Make sure you understand what actions are being proposed
- Think about what the result(s) will be of those actions are taken
- Are the costs involved justified?
- Think about whether there are any alternatives that could be explored
- If you have any queries, contact the Clerk, Chairman or author of the report – preferably before the meeting

Ahead of the Meeting

Having read the agenda and associated documents in advance of the meeting as above, then:

- Identify the areas where you feel you have a contribution to make
- Prepare yourself – check your facts, the background
- Be aware of meeting procedures as set out in Standing Orders
- Remember it is your duty alone to declare an interest and, if in doubt, ask the clerk

During the Meeting

- Indicate a wish to speak by alerting the Chairman
- Remember not to confine yourself to the Ward which you represent. Consider the parish area as a whole.
- Beware of bringing the council/yourself into disrepute
- Beware of making comments which cannot be substantiated

Apologies for Absence

You have a duty to attend but if something prevents you doing so then notify the Clerk as soon as possible so that your apology and reason can be recorded in the minutes. If you fail

to attend six consecutive meetings without formal council approval you are disqualified and cease to be a Councillor.

4.5 After the Meeting

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to write the minutes as a legal record of the Council's decisions which are confirmed by Council resolution and signed by the Chairman at the next ordinary meeting. No discussion can take place on the minutes other than to their accuracy.

Minutes contain a heading and a decision at the least. They are not a verbatim record of discussions, but the Clerk is likely to minutes any advice given. Councillors can request that their comments be recorded in the minutes and may also call for a recorded vote to be taken (see Standing Orders)

The Clerk aims to circulate the draft minutes for comment within two working days of the meeting giving a deadline for comment in order that they can be published in draft within a week of the meeting.

4.6 Important Documents

The following are important documents that the Councillors should be able to reference in the decision making process :

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Budget for the current year and any projected financial planning
- Parish Map
- Minutes of previous meeting (circulated with agendas)
- Asset Register

Also available to Councillors upon request to the Clerk

- Insurance Policy
- Lease Agreements
- Land Registry Documents
- Audit Documentation

The Parish Council strives to work openly and transparently. To this end we have a **Freedom of Information/Publication Scheme Policy** that sets out what information is available to the public and how it can be accessed (see para 7 below).

We are also subject to the **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities**, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government 2014. This sets out the minimum information that the Council must publish online.

4.7 Council Policies and Procedures

In addition to those mentioned elsewhere in this guide the following are available on request from the Clerk

- Dealing with Complaints

5.0 Planning Matters

Being involved in planning is an important activity for local councils. The Planning Authority, Stratford District Council, will ask for the Parish Council's views as part of their procedure before deciding to grant or refuse planning permission. The Town and Country Planning Act

1990 provides the main legal basis of the English planning system as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Further changes have been introduced by the Localism Act 2011.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic environmental and social planning policies for England and contains the framework within which Local Plans are developed. The purpose of the NPPF is to help achieve 'sustainable development' that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 placed an obligation on local planning authorities to produce a Local Plan (or Core Strategy) shaping how land use and places will change and develop over the next 15-20 years. That for Stratford District Council can be found at <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-regeneration/core-strategy.cfm?frmAlias=/corestrategy/>.

The local plan also sets out a spatial planning strategy – what the general location of development will be. Planning decisions need to be made in line with the development unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

The Localism Act 2011 gives local communities more say in planning by encouraging them to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood. The **Ettington and Fulready Neighbourhood Plan** was developed by a dedicated team of community representatives and was adopted by Stratford District Council in December 2018.

In responding to planning matters either in council meetings or planning committees, members should be familiar with **Material and non-Material Planning Considerations**.

It is sometimes necessary to consider the impact of planning applications on the **Listed Buildings in Ettington**.

6.0 Dealing with Public Money

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides clarification on how councils will be scrutinised when accounting for public money. The Clerk, who is also the Responsible Financial Officer, administers the finances of the Council and collectively Councillors are responsible for ensuring the proper management of the Council's finances to avoid risk of fraud, loss or bad debts. The Council must operate a sound system of internal control in accordance with the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

Detailed information is set out in **Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England** produced and updated by representatives of the National Association of Local Councils (NAL), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and other key stakeholders which can be downloaded by the NALC and WALC website or requested from the Clerk.

The accountability and audit framework places a duty on local councils to complete the Annual Return (its statement of accounts and governance arrangements). Larger councils (of which Ettington is one) are required to submit to a more rigorous testing which includes both internal and external audit. An internal auditor is appointed by the Council whilst the external auditor is appointed and is currently PKF Littlejohn.

The Act states how accounts should be kept, the form of accounts, and how and when they must be approved and published; where and how long tax payers can view the accounts and details behind them and how tax payers can exercise their rights in relation to the accounts.

The annual return is in four linked sections:

- 1 The Annual Governance Statement
- 2 The Statement of Accounts
- 3 The External Auditor's Certificate and Opinion
- 4 The Report of the Internal Auditor

Copies of the **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18** and those of previous years are available on the Council website or by request from the Clerk.

The Council's finances are controlled by checking spending against budget plans quarterly (July, October, January and April) at Council meetings. The Council's **Financial Regulations** set out how the council will manage its finances and its overall system of internal control. As part of this the Council appoints an independent auditor to conduct the internal audit which is, in turn, reported with the accounts to the council for approval and to the external auditor.

Following abolition of the Audit Commission, responsibility for appointing the external auditor was taken over by Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA). For local councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 the **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities** sets out the procedure for public scrutiny of financial management.

As a member of the Council you are responsible, with fellow Councillors, for ensuring that the Annual Return accurately presents the Council's position regarding financial management and the return will be presented at a Parish Council meeting prior to its submission.

For the purposes of day to day banking the Council banks with Unity Trust Bank and uses their electronic banking facility. You will be required to register for electronic banking and the Clerk will provide guidance on how this operates and the procedure for registering.

6.1 Budget and Precept

The Council is empowered to incur expenditure in the execution of its statutory powers. The majority of its funds are obtained in the form of a 'precept' an amount set by the Council and collected by Stratford District Council from the parish council tax payers as part of the annual council tax bill.

The precept is the amount required by Council, after accounting for any other income to cover the costs it expects to incur in the financial year ahead and so it is important that an accurate budget is set for the proper carrying out of the Council's functions. The process for setting the budget normally starts in November each year and the formal request for the precept is sent to Stratford District Council in January, following the Council's agreement on the amount required.

7.0 Handling Information

7.1 Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows the public access to certain types of information held by the Council. It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

Requests must be in writing and contain the requester's name and address; email is acceptable and the Council must respond promptly and normally within 20 working days.

The Council is entitled to make a charge, the details of which are set out in the **Publication Scheme** which also sets out the type of information published and the manner in which it is published.

The Council does not have to respond to repeated or 'vexatious' requests if it has already responded to an identical or substantially similar request from the same person. There are other exemptions which fall into the category of 'absolute exemptions' such as court proceedings or personal information that would breach the Data Protection Act. The Council then has a duty to consider whether disclosure is required in the public interest.

If you receive a Freedom of Information request please pass it to the Clerk in a timely manner – she has the delegated authority to deal with such requests.

7.2 Data Protection

The Council holds a wide range of information and are required to notify the Information Commissioner of personal data it holds subject to certain exemptions. Personal data may be as simple as holding someone's name and address but in addition includes amongst other things details of complaints, list of contacts, employee records and information provided for the purpose of placing a contract to which the data subject is a party. Councillors are covered by the Council's notification and have the same responsibilities with regard to data protection as the Clerk. Personal data is exempt from the **Publication Scheme**.

7.3 General Data Protection Regulations

The GDPR came into effect on 25 May 2018. As a European Regulation, it has direct effect in UK law and automatically applies in the UK until we leave the EU (or until the end of any agreed transition period, if we leave with a deal). After this date, it will form part of UK law under the [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018](#), with some technical changes to make it work effectively in a UK context.

Data protection is the fair and proper use of information about people. It's part of the fundamental right to privacy – but on a more practical level, it's really about building trust between people and organisations. It's about treating people fairly and openly, recognising their right to have control over their own identity and their interactions with others, and striking a balance with the wider interests of society. There are seven key principles:

- Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
- Purpose limitation
- Data minimisation
- Accuracy
- Storage limitation
- Integrity and confidentiality (security)
- Accountability

Refer to **General Data Protection Regulations Policy** for further information.

7.4 Need to Know

Councillors do not have an automatic 'need to know' for all council business and cannot claim an automatic right to see all council documentation and information. However, the council adheres to the requirement to be open and transparent thus if any information is withheld there will be a specific reason for doing so, refer to 7.5 below.

This is the NALC guidance for establishing whether a Councillor has a 'need to know':

- If you are a member of a committee, you have the right to inspect documents or to obtain information relating to the business of the committee;
- If not a committee member you need to demonstrate why sight of the information in questions is necessary to enable you to perform your duties as a Councillor;
- The document/information will be withheld if a Councillor's motives are indirect, improper or ulterior;
- Councillors may not go on a fishing expedition in respect of council documents but should specify precisely what they require.

7.5 Confidential Information

Councils are expected to be open about all their decisions and actions; you have been entrusted with public funds and the council should be transparent in how those funds are spent. However, there will be occasions when disclosure of certain information would be contrary to the public good. It is lawful for the council to discuss certain matters such as those relating to members of staff and to legal disputes in confidential session, ie following a resolution to exclude members of the public from the meeting. Discussions relating to the placing of contracts need not be held in confidence but the 'commercial interest' elements of the contract should be treated as confidential.

The Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct require Members and Officers to maintain confidentiality. When a Councillor is acting, or gives the impression of acting, as a representative of the council a Councillor is obliged not to disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure may be prohibited by law. There are some exceptions, for instance if you are required to do so by law, where you have a person's consent or disclosure is in the public interest (justified in only very limited circumstances).

Improper disclosure of confidential information constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct.

7.6 Defamation and Privilege

When making statements in council and committee meetings Councillors should be aware that they are subject to the general principles of law relating to defamation. As a general defence a councillor should show that any such alleged statement was made on a 'qualified' privileged occasion, when the Councillor who makes the statement must show that the statement was made without malice and in pursuit of public duty. If, upon investigation, the statement is found to be true then it is not defamatory at all, but if it is found to be untrue then privilege can be claimed if the Councillor acted without malice.

7.7 Press and Media

Dealing with the Press and Media

- Seek help from the Clerk
- Learn how to explain your views on issues and do not talk 'off the record' some things are best left unsaid
- When approached in person or on the phone think carefully before you speak and ask for time to consider your response if necessary.
- Think carefully about anything you say. Remember that it may well be reported and it will be your voice that said it.
- Do your research and learn all the facts before you respond to questions

- If you don't know the answer to a particular question, better to say so than evade the question or hesitate

7.8 Social Media

Social Media Policy

The Council doesn't currently have Facebook, Twitter or other Social Media pages. That said, there are local interest pages and the following provides guidance on their use:

- Where comments are made about the Council do not react in your role of Councillor
- If a request is made to you specifically private message the person requesting that they contact you using by phone or using your Councillor e-mail address – or ask them to contact the Clerk
- Think before you type – could what you are about to say be contravening the Code of Conduct or construed as the view of the Council

Website

The Council website (www.ettington.org) is maintained by the Clerk. Agendas and Minutes are regularly published together with the Chairman's report. Feel free to suggest when particular issues warrant further 'exposure'.

8.0 Members' Services

As a small Council without an office limited services are available to members. If you require printing or a meeting room then contact the Clerk.

8.1 Members' Allowances

The Council does not pay an allowance to its Members. It can reimburse costs incurred in the course of Council business and this is explained in [Policy on Payment of Expenses to Council Members](#).

8.2 Training and Development

Councillors will be informed of any available training or briefings they are expected or invited to attend. Induction Training is available via Warwickshire Association for Local Councils and other training events as advised by the Clerk.

Councillors are encouraged to attend training and development when offered to develop their knowledge and skills in carrying out their role. A budget for Councillor Training is available.

Skills needed: Councillors require many skills to carry out the various aspect of their role effectively. Of prime importance are listening, questioning, consulting, negotiating and dealing with conflict. Contact the Clerk if there are skills you wish to develop, eg public speaking, use of IT etc, who will endeavour to source training.

9.0 Managing Risk

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on Councils as employees to protect the health and safety of its employees and public. The clerk works from home using Council equipment and undertakes appropriate risk assessment.

The Council owns/is responsible for:

- The Playing Field – equipment and environs and the following approach is taken to risk assessment:
 - Assessment of the play equipment and seating is regularly undertaken as part of the Grounds Maintenance Contract
 - Inspection of the trees is undertaken every 3 years following which necessary tree work is undertaken
- Pavement Lighting: The Council contracts, on an annual basis for inspection and maintenance of pavement lighting

The Council undertakes a review of its risks annually in May. Using the Asset Register as a guide the Council identifies the level and severity of any likely risk and take appropriate actions to manage the consequences.

9.1 Insurance

The Council's Insurance Policy covers property and public liability in addition to mandatory cover for Employers Liability, Fidelity Guarantee (employee dishonesty). The schedule is available from the Clerk.

10.0 Local Council Award Scheme

The Local Council Award Scheme was created in 2014. It exists to encourage local councils to do their best and provides a framework for supporting all councils to meet their full potential. Ettington Parish Council has not been assessed for the scheme.

The scheme consists of three levels:

- The Foundation Award demonstrates that a council meets the minimum requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice and should be achievable by all town and parish councils.
- The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.
- The Quality Gold Award demonstrates a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

11.0 Useful Contacts and Sources of Advice

- The Clerk – it is her job to receive information and keep the Council informed. Your Clerk can also seek help through membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (slcc.co.uk)
- Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (www.walc.org.uk). The Clerk will provide you with the username and password for the Members section of the site.
- The National Association of Local Councils (www.nalc.gov.uk)
- Warwickshire County Council
- Stratford District Council

12.0 Useful Publications

- The Good Councillor Guide
- Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide.

13.0 Parish Fund

The Parish Council, as a body, is Trustee to the Parish Fund which has a small fund to which Parishioners can apply for educational purposes. Meetings are called when applications for grants are received and/or to agree the annual report to the Charity Commission (registration number 254957). Applications are by submission of

- Application Form
- Guidance to Applicants

List of Documents:

Highlighted in Yellow and Attached	
1	Declaration of Acceptance of Office
2	Register of Members' Pecuniary Interest
3	Contact Information
4	The Good Councillor Guide
5	Parish Map
6	Minutes of the Meeting of 10 April 2019
Highlighted in Green and Available on the Council website or on request from the Clerk	
1	Asset Register
2	Code of Conduct
3	Policy on Gifts and Hospitality
4	Standing Orders
5	Financial Regulations
6	Freedom of Information/Publication Scheme
7	General Data Protection Regulations
8	Ettington and Fulready Neighbourhood Plan
9	Dealing With The Press
10	Social Media Policy
11	Policy on Payment of Expenses
12	Parish Fund Application Form
13	Parish Fund Guide for Applicants
14	Annual Governance and Accountability return 2017/18
Highlighted in Red and available on request from the Clerk	
1	Material and Non-Material Planning Considerations
2	Ettington Listed Buildings
3	Dealing with Complaints
4	Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England
5	Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners Guide
6	Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

