Minutes of the Meeting of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council held on Thursday 4th September 2025 at Lapley and Wheaton Aston village hall

In attendance:
Cllr W Millington - **Wheaton Aston (Chairman)**
Cllr D Hodgkiss– **Stretton**
Cllr J Hodgkiss**- Wheaton Aston**
Cllr V Renfrew – **Lapley**
Cllr R Nelson -**Wheaton Aston** (**Vice Chairman) and South Staffordshire District Council**
Cllr Sue Whittingham - **Wheaton Aston**
Cllr D Weate- **Wheaton Aston**
Cllr J Ford – **Wheaton Aston**
Cllr. M. Griffiths – **Lapley**

Also in Attendance:
Mrs A Watson **– Parish Clerk**
Cllr C Large**- Staffordshire County Council (part of the meeting)**
2 members of the public

Apologies:

Absent:
Cllr M Smith – **Wheaton Aston**

Acronyms:
LSWA PC: Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council
SSC: South Staffordshire council
SCC: Staffordshire County Council
Cllr: Councillor
CPD: Continuous professional development
SPCA: Staffordshire Parish Councils Association
PCSO: Police Community Support Officer
SLCC: Society of local Council clerks

NALC: National association of local councils
CMDR: Commander
WACFR- Wheaton Aston Community First Responders
FOM: Forest of Mercia
VO: Village Orderly
BKV: Best Kept Village
PSPO: Public Space Protection Order
NP: Neighbourhood Plan

Public forum

The two candidates for co-option attended for a Q & A session with members regarding the role

Standing orders implemented at 7. 17pm

38. To consider apologies

No apologies and reasons for absence received

39.Declaration of Interests

Cllr J Hodgkiss and Cllr D Hodgkiss declared a Non-registered personal interested in item 52

40. Approval of minutes

Resolved approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Meeting of Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council held on 10th July 2025

Resolved to bring agenda item 44 forward due to time constraints for Cllr Large

44. To receive report from South Staffordshire Council

County council have finished efficiency reviews and expecting a 5% reduction in budgets going forward.

This will be evident in the fair pricing review- this is around the Government set target amounts for precepts and increasing council tax to meet services, if the expected level of precept isn't met, the council can be penalised

Highways update- started a strategic review, will be doing a speed review on A5 during September

Bus service update- a meeting is to be held with officers. Buses to Brewood and Penkridge have been highlighted as being the most queried

Utilities can complete work on highways at any time, lead at highways is investigating implementing a 12-week programme of work so more notice is given and planned around other works. Emergency work will still take place

An announcement is due later in the year on the contract with Amey

Strategic reviews on efficiency and structure in each department

LGR- SCC submission due within the next two weeks, currently six options to be considered for the area (7.40pm Cllr Large left the meeting)

41. To receive a report from Staffordshire Police

Increase to reports in complaints around E-Scooters

42.To receive report from Parish Council Clerk

<u>Information</u>

8.7.25 Reported excessive dog fouling along bridle way Broadholes Lane – Mottey Meadows , SSC to install additional signage and bins

11.7.25 Shared details of the Parish Councillor vacancy

18.7.25 Shared details of the WMI A5 night roadworks

28.7.25 New mobile ordered for VO due to the age of previous , 24-month contract entered into, second contract reduced in cost to balance out the difference

Support given to the Scarecrow festival committee

Water rea at Sowdley Green has been cleared out

4.8.25 Skate Park maintenance check and work from 25/26 action plan completed, all boards that were damaged have been replaced. Work identified for next year has been added to the 2026/27 action plan
4.8.25 Letter of support for grant funding written for the Sports and Social Club
4.8.25 Flooding/drainage concern on Ivetsey Rd forwarded to SSC highways officer
5.8.25 Annual play inspections booked
5.8.25 Damage caused to an alder at MF. VI has made a new support
7.8.25 road Closure NOTICE is hereby given that Staffordshire County Council on 23rd September 2025 intends to make an Order the effect of which will be to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Stretton Road in Lapley as lies between Bickford Road and Long View unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to properties on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. An alternative route for traffic is available via Bickford Road, Church Lane, Stretton Road and vice versa. For more information, visit: https://one.network/?tm=144839524. The order will come into operation on 29th September 2025, and the said works will commence on or as near as practicable to that date. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by 3rd October 2025. The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months, or until the fibre installation and maintenance works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road have been completed, whichever is the earlier. Date: 11th September 2025 (Date of intended First advertisement) Kate Loader, County Solicitor No. 2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford. ST16 2DH Ref: 4447185 Enquiries: Customer Contact Centre Tel: 0300 111 8000
Out of date defib pads replaced
All allotment plots have been taken and paid in full for the forthcoming year
Ricoh contract amendments:
The quarterly rental £99.88
The mono cost per copy is £0.0029
The colour cost per copy is £0.0262

All your toners, service, parts & callouts are included.

Maintenance
Drainage update received from SCC 317.25:

We do have all the jobs on our system following the helpful site meeting that took place, and some work has been completed.

We have installed a new manhole cover and frame on Marston Road, the location where we previously had one buried, on the side near the playfields.

There has also been some routine gully cleansing along Fenton House Lane, which took place earlier this month.

However, we do still have some CCTV and jetting of manholes outstanding as this is outside of the routine cleansing schedule. As we only have 1 x CCTV throughout Staffordshire this resource is heaving in demand.

I will notify the gully scheduler of the recent cleansing, and if she has a resource available for the manholes to be jetted and CCTV'd.

Action plan item update
Finger posts replaced at Sunny bank (from RTA) and Lapley Green
Temporary bench installed at Primrose Play Area
New chairs purchased for the office
Cable runway and zip wire removed
Outstanding Items:

- Defib at Ivetsey Rd- Planning are waiting for the site to be handed over. Once this has been completed an officer will assess the site for installation. SSC are to be landowners and are aware LSWA PC wish to install on site.
- Lapley Green registration-. Awaiting update from Tedstone Solicitors
- Gated alley Broadholes/Pinfold-. - SSC has allotted a public space protection order for the alley to remain closed. The next review will be in 2027
- Post office – no premises found., this has now been taken on at district level.
- Birkenshaw Lane is not at position 60 (Jan 25) it will possibly enter a full public consultation by the end of the year
- The order for the public footpath from Lapley Lane to Bickford Farm (modification order 2023) is to be determined on 25th November 10am at County Buildings, Martin Street Stafford, ST16 2LE

Consultations

Meetings/Events
23.9.25 Moat House Acton Trussell BKV awards night
Clerks meeting 1st Tuesday of each month
17th June- SLCC Branch meeting

Day	Times	Course
June		
25th	7 pm – 9.00 pm	Introduction to Planning
26th	7 pm – 9.30 pm	Explore Chairmanship
July		
16th	7 pm to 9 pm	Councillor Introduction
23rd	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction
August		
5th	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction
September		
4th	10 am to 12 pm	CiLCA Autumn 25
10th	10 am to 12 pm	Chairmanship skills
11th	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction

22nd	10 am to 12 pm	Councillor Introduction
24th	10 am to 12 pm	Councillor Development
October		
7th	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction
8th	10 am to 12 pm	CiLCA Autumn 25
16th	7 pm to 9 pm	Councillor Development
29th	7 pm to 9 pm	Councillor Introduction
November		
6th	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction
10th	7 pm to 9 pm	Chairmanship skills
12th	10 am to 12 pm	CiLCA Autumn 25
20th	7 pm to 9 pm	Councillor Development
December		
4th	10 am to 12 pm	Councillor Development
8th	10 am to 12 pm	Clerks Introduction
11th	10 am to 12 pm	CiLCA Autumn 25
15th	7 pm to 9 pm	Councillor Introduction
Remaining Dates CiLCA (2026)		
January	10 am to 12 pm	19th
February	10 am to 12 pm	17th
March	10 am to 12 pm	19th
April	10 am to 12 pm	13th

24.9.25 Bradford walk 3pm

Items emailed to councillors.

SSC Planning app 25/00569/TREE
SPCA 28.7.25 devolution posters
28.7.25 SPCA community governance details 5 5
7.8.25 SSC Planning app 25/00418/FULHH
7.8.25 Bradford estates invitation to the Bradford walk opening
14.8.25 SPCA Newsbulletin
26.8.25 Wheaton Aston Court fair details

26.8.25 application No: 25/00523/FULHH Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and erection of new 1.5 storey annex/garage Location: 2 Mercian Way Lapley STAFFORD ST19 9JY
26.83.25 WMI update
26.8.25 Application No: 25/00291/FULHH Proposal: Proposed garage Location: 3 Old Hall Cottages Watling Street Ivetsey Bank STAFFORD ST19 9QT
26.8.25 Application No: 25/00672/LBC Proposal: Single storey garage extension, fenestration change, new rooflight and ASHP Location: Mill Barn 2 Stretton Mill Stretton Mill Road Stretton STAFFORD ST19 9LH
8.7.25 Sanctuary housing
28.7.25 BKV awards night invitation

Use of devolved powers

Response to planning comments:

Comments 25/00418/FULHH
£54.99 new boots for VO
£26.99 padlock for allotments

SSC Planning Decision

25/00433/VAR 1 Queens Cottages Bickford Road Lapley STAFFORD ST19 9JX Variation of Condition 2 of approved application 23/00659/FULHH to install 2.no additional roof windows – Approved subject to conditions

Annual Play Area Inspection

These have been booked for December 2025

The bench at Primrose has been subject to vandalism since the installation two weeks ago resolved to purchase a single bench, costs and designs to be brought to the next meeting budget of £1200. VO to repair the slats and arrange removal to allotments.

43. To receive report from Staffordshire County Council

Item brought forward

44. To receive report from South Staffordshire Council

Postal vote changes- a change introduced in 2022 postal votes arrangements cannot be valid for more than 3 years. These will need to be renewed, mail drop to communicate this
Parking issues (agenda item 51)- the officer for enforcement has been conducted and since May 25 officers have visited on 8 separate occasions, one notice given.
Mill Lane was considered for parking restrictions, at this point it has not been carried forward
Cllr Renfrew- a meeting was held about parking issues in Lapley with PCSO's, the parking issues have improved
Future planning- developers are considering areas for development in South Staffs, as the parish is open countryside Cllr Nelson has considered that the parish could receive a rise in the number of applications. Specification for lawful objections are essential for SSC to decline an application

45. Financial matters

Resolved:

a) To approve the expenditure and income for July 2025
b) To approve the reconciled statements the Unity trust main account and Unity trust reserve account to 31st July 2025
c) To note payments/decisions made under delegated powers

46. Planning recommendations

To consider planning matters including

a) Planning applications: **SCC/25/0090/VOC-ES** Staffordshire Energy Recovery Facility, Enterprise Drive, Staffordshire, WV10 7DF Application to not comply with (to vary) Condition 1 (permitted

throughput) of Planning Permission SS.14/20/636 W, as amended by non-material amendment SCC/25/0070/NMA to increase the permitted throughput. Resolved 'Concerns about how the additional vehicular usage be managed and the access point for the vehicles'

b) Application No: 25/00523/FULHH Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and erection of new 1.5 storey annex/garage Location: 2 Mercian Way Lapley STAFFORD ST19 9JY
LSWA PC objects to this application. There are contradictions on the ecological report on the ash and the hedge and the importance for the bats, these should be retained for the wildlife. The report states that these should not be removed yet this is contradicted in the arb report. Suggestion that if the tree and hedge must be removed then these should be replanted.
The annex does not connect to the house; concerns that the application would be a separate dwelling. This application is large for the proposal'
Application No: 25/00291/FULHH Proposal: Proposed garage Location: 3 Old Hall Cottages Watling Street Ivetsey Bank STAFFORD ST19 9QT
Resolved 'the floorplan for this extension is extremely large and would provide a large square footage, the plans only show one entrance other than this concern and the intended use for the space – no objection'

c) Application No: 25/00672/LBC Proposal: Single storey garage extension, fenestration change, new rooflight and ASHP Location: Mill Barn 2 Stretton Mill Stretton Mill Road Stretton STAFFORD ST19 9LH Resolved : 'Previous objections remain'

d) Planning applications received after the agenda papers distributed: Noted: Application Number: 25/00733/TREE Proposed: Wheaton Aston Conservation Area: T1 Oak - Crown reduction by up to 2m back to old cuts. At: 40 High Street Wheaton Aston STAFFORD ST19 9NP
Planning Application 25/00623/FUL Proposal: Erection of 1 no. dwelling Location: Magazine Field Magazine Lane Wheaton Aston STAFFORD ST19 9NF resolved: to hold a public planning meeting before the closing date to consider the application due to insufficient time to evaluate the application

e) Planning Steering group
Members to encourage others to join

47.BKV Competition

- Cllr Renfrew and Guest will attend the awards evening on behalf of Lapley and Cllr Smith and guest will attend on behalf of Wheaton Aston
- Best front garden awards outstanding Lapley winner, will invite winners to October meeting

48. Christmas

- To receive an update – first license has been submitted, St Marys School has been contacted, First aid, Salvation Army and fair booked
- Confirm tree purchase resolved to purchased trees from Bradshaw's £500 WA and £140 Lapley, J Whittingham and Son to install at £360
- Confirm entertainment resolved to appoint a singer offering a variety of styles for 2 x half an hour session, cost £200
- Clerk is to ask Revd. Keene to switch the lights on
- S hooks and zip ties required
- Road closure and Tens to be applied for

49.Community Governance Review

Resolved to respond to the Governance Review that this is not the appropriate time to be completing this review. This should be completed once devolution has been completed and we know what duties that parish councils may receive

50. Play Areas

- To receive an update on funding – Sir Gavin Williamson MP has offered his support to the project, there are not any government initiatives that can be accessed at the moment. Clerk continue to seek funding

SSC officer has spoken with the clerk about the UKPF funding and confirmed that £25k could be
applied for towards the gym equipment. Resolved to complete stage 1: gym equipment and apply for the funding , gym total from Kompan (selected contractor) is 39,721.29, £114721.29 required from renovation funds, resolved to transfer from play area reserves. Clerk to meet tender requirements

- Confirm gate purchase for Primrose – resolved to purchase galvanised anti trap bow green if possible, clerk to arrange within budget set

51. Parking issues

Covered in agenda item 44

52. Co-option

Resolved the applicants meet the criteria for co-option, following discussion was to invite to join Mr Chris Robinson to the council as a co-opted member. Clerk to arrange paperwork and invite member to the office for an induction vote : unanimous for the highest scoring candidate on the matrix

The other candidate is to investigate if there is an appetite for younger community members to make up a youth council

53.SIDs

Resolved to appoint Capital to install the SID using traffic management as below:
Installation costs: 2-way lights, permits and utility drawings £1370.50
Labour and materials £779.50
Post + fitting kit £145.00
Total £2295 +VAT
£1500 remaining in budget £1,000 grant available from Cllr Large

54.Policies

Resolved to accept the following policies

- Lone Worker Policy
- Litter Picker Risk Assessment (attached)
- Co-option Policy and Procedure
- Death of A Senior Figure Confidential
- Christmas Tree Risk Assessment (attached)
- GDPR Audit (attached)
- Christmas Event Risk Assessment
- NEW Recruitment and Probationary Procedure

55 Items for future - Each councillor may use this opportunity to report on matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. **Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.**
Devolution
Birkenshaw Lane

56. Date of next meeting: Thursday 16th October at 7pm at Lapley and Wheaton Aston Village Hall, the community meeting will take place at 6pm

Mrs A Watson Parish Council Clerk

Meeting closed 9.00pm

Appendix 2

No	Payment Reference	Gross	To pay	Heading Reference	Invoice	Invoice	Details

95 £315.81 £315.81 170 01/07/25 Amazon - Clerks Card BKV materials
96 £41.82 £41.82 175 01/07/25 Amazon - Graffiti Remover VO card
97 £14.99 £14.99 175 01/07/25 Amazon - VO supplies for MF maintenance
75 £429.86 £429.86 100/19/5 02/07/25 120393 Office Furniture Direct - Office Chairs
100 -£339.16 -£339.16 02/07/25 INV09645856 WaterPlus - Water Supply charges in credit
1 -£355.30 130/2/4 Brought Forward
2 £16.14 130/2/4 Water Supply New Charges
92 £50.46 £50.46 130/2/1 08/07/25 203909 Boningale Nurseries - BKV Plants
76 £64.74 £64.74 100/10 10/07/25 MO38 J2 British Telecom - Regular charges
77 £295.00 £295.00 150/1 10/07/25 MEM254110-1 SLCC Enterprises Ltd - Membership fee
78 £387.67 £387.67 100/19/1 11/07/25 INV D 08231 Cloudy It - Monthly charges
80 £1,439.00 £1,439.00 120/1/1 11/07/25 2320 Ditton Services - Grounds Maintenance
81 £72.00 £72.00 120/1/1 11/07/25 2322 Ditton Services - Treatment of Alder Beetle at
Marson Field
82 £26.50 £26.50 100/18/1 11/07/25 Mrs Amy Watson - Mileage
83 £56.23 £56.23 100/9 11/07/25 59268891 Ricoh U K Limited - Ink Cartridge
No Payment Gross To pay Heading Invoice Invoice Details
Reference Reference
84 £720.00 £720.00 120/3 11/07/25 199 J Whittingham and Son - Finger posts at Lapley
85 £111.06 £111.06 120/5 11/07/25 28516 JRB Enterprises Ltd - Dog poo bags
93 £58.32 £58.32 100/9 11/07/25 7764924 Espo - Office Stationery
94 £380.00 £380.00 100/2 11/07/25 514948/103781 South Staffordshire District Council - Office rental
102 £62.60 £62.60 100/10 16/07/25 V02366791590 EE - Monthly bill
101 £47.00 £47.00 150/9 29/07/25 010793385 Information Commissioner's Office - ICO renewal
79 £9.45 £9.45 100/21 31/07/25 152 Untity Trust - Interest Charges
98 £9.45 £9.45 100/21 31/07/25 152 Untity Trust - Bank Charges
99 £8.40 £8.40 100/21 31/07/25 151 Untity Trust - Banking charges may
1 68112345 £111.58 £111.58 100/12 12/12/25 102567235 Ricoh U K Limited - Printer/Copier £111.58
Sub Total £4,372.78 £4,372.78
£5,274.90 £5,274.90 Confidential
Total £9,647.68 £9,647.68
Bank Account Reconciled Statement
Unity Trust - Current Account 1111559/2035784 30-98-00
Statement Number 52 Bank Statement No. 52
Statement Opening Balance £49,297.01 Opening Date 01/07/25
Statement Closing Balance £40,945.11 Closing Date 31/07/25
True/ Cashbook Closing Balance £40,225.11
Date Cheque/ Ref. Supplier/ Customer Debit (£) Credit (£) Balance (£)

01/06/25	WaterPlus	0.00	0.00	49,297.01
30/06/25	Information Commissioner's Office	47.00	0.00	49,250.01
01/07/25	Transfer	51.97	0.00	49,198.04
08/07/25	Transfer	0.00	165.00	49,363.04
09/07/25	Transfer	165.00	0.00	49,198.04
31/07/25	Mrs Amy Watson	26.55	0.00	49,171.49
31/07/25	EE	62.60	0.00	49,108.89
31/07/25	South Staffordshire District Council	380.00	0.00	48,728.89
31/07/25	Espo	58.32	0.00	48,670.57
31/07/25	Boningale Nurseries	60.55	0.00	48,610.02
31/07/25	Jessica Shulman	477.63	0.00	48,132.39
31/07/25	Mrs Amy Watson			
31/07/25	Mrs. Josie Morris			
31/07/25	Mr. Malcolm Bissell			
31/07/25	JRB Enterprises Ltd	111.06	0.00	45,341.36
31/07/25	Malcolm Bissell	0.00	55.00	45,396.36
31/07/25	Ricoh U K Limited	56.23	0.00	45,340.13
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	55.00	45,395.13
31/07/25	Ditton Services	72.00	0.00	45,323.13
31/07/25	Ditton Services	1,439.00	0.00	43,884.13
31/07/25	Untity Trust	9.45	0.00	43,874.68
31/07/25	Cloudy It	387.67	0.00	43,487.01
31/07/25	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	295.00	0.00	43,192.01
31/07/25	British Telecom	64.74	0.00	43,127.27
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	55.00	43,182.27
31/07/25	Staffordshire County Council Superannuation Fund	163.08	0.00	43,019.19
31/07/25	Staffordshire County Council Superannuation Fund	809.39	0.00	42,209.80
31/07/25	HMRC	409.87	0.00	41,799.93
1/07/25	HMRC	70.80	0.00	41,729.13
31/07/25	HMRC	144.16	0.00	41,584.97
31/07/25	HMRC	61.00	0.00	41,523.97
31/07/25	HMRC	327.20	0.00	41,196.77
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	20.00	41,216.77
31/07/25	HMRC	21.20	0.00	41,195.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	20.00	41,215.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	55.00	41,270.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	00	55.00	41,325.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	50.00	41,375.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	30.00	41,405.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	20.00	41,425.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	9	0.00	30.00 41,455.57
31/07/25	allotment rent	0.00	30.00	41,485.57
31/07/25	Office Furniture Direct	429.86	0.00	41,055.71
31/07/25	HMRC	110.60	0.00	40,945.11
Uncleared and unpresented effects				

31/07/25	J Whittingham and Son	720.00	40,225.11
Total uncleared and unpresented		720.00	0.00
Total debits / credits		9711.9	640

Bank Account Reconciled Statement

Unity trust working reserves **20419150** **60-83-01**

Statement Number 40 Bank Statement No. 40

Statement Opening Balance £71,232.42 Opening Date 01/07/25

Statement Closing Balance £71,119.39 Closing Date 31/07/25

True/ Cashbook Closing Balance £71,119.39

Date	Cheque/ Ref.	Supplier/ Customer	Debit (£)	Credit (£)	Balance (£)
01/07/25	Transfer0.00	51.97	71,284.39		
08/07/25	Transfer165.00	0.00	71,119.39		

Uncleared and unpresented effects

Total uncleared and unpresented		0.00	0.00
Total debits / credits		165	51.97

Appendix 3 LONE WORKING POLICY

Adopted April 2018

Reviewed Sept 2023

Reviewed Sept 2025

1. Introduction

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council(LSWAPC) recognises that its employee(s) are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of office hours.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, LSWAPC has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employee(s) have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of LSWAPC staff and councillors.

3. Definition

The Health & Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers LSWAPC's employees, the Clerk, the Village Orderly, litter picker, volunteer litter pickers, volunteer park risk assessment officer, Councillors and on occasion, the Assistant Clerk, who are required to carry out his or her duties for all or part of his/her/their working day working in isolation.

4. Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

(a) increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

(b) ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

(c) ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.

(d) ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone.

(e) encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for:

The Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council is responsible for:

ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;

- providing resources for putting the policy into practice
- ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

5.2 Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;
- taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees;
- identify situations where people work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own;
- ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- ensuring that staff identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
- ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and
- providing a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment, if and where this is felt to be desirable.

5.3 Employees , volunteers and councillors are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate and complete an accident form;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone;
- always maintain good communication to minimise risk.
- Consider downloading apps such as 'Hollies guard' to devices
- Councillors are to reduce the risk of their personal safety being compromised by speaking/engaging with residents in pairs/groups
- Councillors are to reduce the risk of miscommunication with residents by making any pre-arranged visits in pairs/groups
- Councillors are encouraged to engage with residents via email (where possible)

6. Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff, volunteers or councillors whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as any mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A lone workers checklist will be completed (see Lone Worker

Risk Assessment). This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working. A risk assessment will be carried out.
Risk assessments for site based lone workers will include:

- is the person fit and suitable to work alone;
- safe access and exit;
- risk of violence;
- are women especially at risk if they work alone;
- safety of equipment for individual use;
- channels of communication in an emergency;
- site security;
- security arrangements, i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms;
- level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers will, additionally, include:

- travelling between sites;
- reporting and recording arrangements;
- communication and traceability and personal safety/security.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

7. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as "an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage". In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action.
Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or "unsafe" (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

8. Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting its staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

9. Support for Staff, volunteers and councillors

Employees, volunteers and councillors working for/behalf of the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe.
Staff, volunteers and councillors should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

10. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Council's Chair should be contacted. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

11. Lone Working for the Clerk

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Council or, in an emergency, the Chair of the Council.

12. Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back, for homeworkers details should be left with a family member or friend.
- If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office/home environment.
- If the visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with a
- Colleague, family member, friend or councillor to check that a lone worker has returned to their base on completion of the visit. If possible delay the visit until staff can be accompanied.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague/councillor/family member/friend may also be advisable. Staff should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague/councillor in this situation.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries – to be reported if used.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.
- Before making home visits, the lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.
- Having collected all the relevant information, you then need to plan your contact:
- Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety;
- What is the best time of the day to visit? Assess the situation. Are you familiar with the property locations? Consider the weather/visibility/seasons – will you be driving in the dark?
- Where is the most appropriate place to see this person?
- Do you need to take a colleague or councillor with you?
- If another company is involved, can a joint visit be arranged?
- Ensure that someone knows where you are at all times and do not make last minute/unplanned visits.
- Do you have a personal panic alarm (if applicable) or mobile (if applicable) –
- check it is charged.
- Know where you are travelling to. Check your route to avoid stopping and
- asking strangers for directions.
- Be informed of adverse weather and only conduct your role when you have determined that it is safe to do so
- Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible.
- Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway.
- Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight.
- If you do not intend to return to the office after your visit let someone know.

13. Exemptions

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons under instruction in a fixed base (example work experience, helping with council tasks etc.)
- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by LSWAPC to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Council

Policy and procedure for co-opting a new Councillor

Adopted 16th May 2019
Reviewed Sept 2023
Latest review Sept 2025

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.
Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer).
Although seeking "expressions of interest" is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, LSWA Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone living or working in the parish or within 3 miles of its boundaries who is eligible to stand as a Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration by completing an application form (See Appendix A). Applicants should attend at least three Council meetings as members of the public before applying to become a Councillor.

Please note it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone (the Parish Council office telephone number is acceptable) and Council e-mail will be public information. A Council email address will be provided. A Declaration of Interests Form must be completed and will be published.

At the next Full Council meeting:

i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
ii. Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option
iii. Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies);
iv. Vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at iii above) should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion.

v. The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at iii above, if the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.

The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests'

Assuming that the co-option position is filled and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at the next Full Council meeting.

If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
- Forward thinking
- Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

- Ability to listen constructively
- A good team player
- Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects
- Solid interest in local matters
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community
- Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.
- Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.
- Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Community Councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups
- Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to Town, Parish and Community Councils or local authorities
- Experience of delivering presentations
- Good IT skills as email is the main route of communication

Circumstances

- Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.

Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council

APPENDIX A

Office FF028

South Staffordshire Business Hub

South Staffordshire District Council
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
Wolverhampton
Staffordshire
WV8 1PE
Tel: 01902 842556
office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Parish Council Clerk: Amy Watson

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR ON LAPLEY, STRETTON AND WHEATON ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Full name:

Home address inc.Postcode:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Email:

It is a condition of being a Councillor for LSWA PC that your phone number (office) and Council email address (official email address will be supplied) be made public via notice boards and website.

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A COUNCILLOR QUALIFICATIONS

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country? **Yes/No**

Are you 18 or over? **Yes/No**

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)

Are you on the electoral register for the parish? **Yes/No**

Have you lived either in the ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year? **Yes/No**

Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston for at least a year? **Yes/No**

Have you had your only or main place of work in ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston for at least a year? **Yes/No**

DISQUALIFICATIONS

(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order? **Yes/No**

Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine? **Yes/No**

Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority? **Yes/No**

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a Councillor.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council	**Risk Assessment & Management** **Christmas Lights Switch On** **22nd November 2025**

The aim of this risk assessment is to identify any potential hazards and put in place measures to remove those hazards or reduce the probability of them to an acceptable level. Risk assessment is to be conducted on the day of the event alongside the risk criteria checklist which is to be conducted hourly by the Head Steward.

Risk is assessed as the product of the consequences of an event occurring and the probability that it will occur. Various risk scenarios are described and assessed subjectively according to the following guidelines:

Consequences

	Rating	Description
1	Trivial	Minor cuts and bruises treated on site by first aid. Loss of <£10
2	Non serious	Cuts and bruises which need to be seen by a doctor/nurse. Loss of <£100
3	Serious	Minor injury which requires treatment as a hospital outpatient or Loss of £1,000
4	Very serious	Injury which requires treatment as an in patient or loss of <£10,000
5	Catastrophic	Serious, permanent disability or death or loss of <£100,000

Probability

	Rating	Probability ratio
1	Almost impossible	1/1,000,000
2	Highly unlikely	1/10,000
3	Unlikely	1/1,000
4	Possible	1/100
5	Probable	1/10

The risk is classified as follows:

1-2	Trivial, no action required
3-5	Tolerable
6-12	Moderate risk, wherever possible action should be taken to reduce the risk to a level that is as low as is reasonably practical.
15-16	Unacceptable risk, action must be taken to reduce it to a level which is as low as is reasonable practical
20-25	Intolerable risk. Activity should be discontinued unless it is possible to reduce the risk to an acceptable limit (12)

Hazard	Consequence	Probability	Risk	Control measures
Christmas Tree Lights				
Accident whilst stone circle is being removed to reveal the socket for the tree	4	2	8	Plate is removed and stored by J Whittingham and Son workers who are experienced in removing the plate.
People falling into the socket for the tree	3	2	6	Socket is removed the same day (subject to conditions, if unable to install tree then appropria safety measures are taken Ie, barriers erected) as the tree is installed. Socket is covered by wood a cones.
Accident whilst erecting the tree	3	2	6	J Whittingham and Son are appointed to install th tree
Accident whilst tree lights are being installed, post installation & upon removal	5	2	10	Use specialist contractors who are experienced in this work. Require them to comply with Staffordshire County Council and EON code of practice
Public making contact with dangerous electrical supplies	5	1	5	Use low voltage supplies for equipment less than 2.5 metres off ground. Specialist contractors are ensure safety of equipment,
People walking into tree in WA village centre	1	1	1	Barrier fencing around tree Area well lit
Tree falling due to extreme weather conditions	5	2	10	Parish Council Clerk, Chairman and Chair of CLWG will check the weather forecasts regularly and wil arrange for the tree to be monitored and taken down (if required) if high wind (31-38mph) is predicted. A separate risk assessment will be undertaken
People reaching Lapley green tree	5	1	5	The tree is in the centre of Lapley green and not barriered due to low footfall accessing the area
Christmas Lights on Lighting Columns				
Accident whilst lights are being installed or post installation	5	2	10	Use specialist contractors who are experienced in this work. Require them to comply with

				Staffordshire County Council and EON code of practice
High vehicle hitting lights over carriageway	4	1	4	Lights are above the pavement not the road and a above the clearance height required by Staffordshire County Council Highways.
Light falling and hitting a pedestrian	5	1	5	Lights are installed by specialist contractors and a maintained by a specialist lighting company.
Switch On Event				
Injury to stewards	4	2	8	All stewards are issued with instructions, hi-vis ve and an emergency plan and a first aid point is provided and manned by Tactical Services
Injury from cooking equipment	4	3	12	Cooking equipment used at the rear of stalls away from the serving counter. Liability insurances mus be provided by Stall holders, all stall holders must be competent in usage and hold a risk assessmen
Overcrowding in the square	5	1	5	There are four exit paths/routes from the square. The Head Steward will monitor the number of visitors. 2023 event saw the introduction of 'clicker' count to establish the number of people attending. An Emergency Plan has been created t deal with emergencies such as overcrowding. Numbers are also monitored by handing out caro sheets
Stalls catching fire	5	2	10	There are no naked flames being used. Two stalls using electric cooking equipment are to provide sand buckets and issued with instructions not to cover electrical cables. Fire engine at location
Public making contact with dangerous electrical supplies	5	1	5	The electricity supply box for the tree and the doo to the lighting columns are locked and can access can only be gained through the use of specialist keys.
Performers slipping on stage/stage usage for grotto	4	3	12	The stage is provided by Dangerous Sheep events ltd and this has been considered by their risk assessment. An employee of Dangerous Sheep ltd will be in the presence of the stage at all times.
Injury from fire on stage	5	2	10	Electrical sound equipment is never left unattended. Stage lighting is monitored regularly An employee of Dangerous Sheep Events Ltd will present at all times. A multi-purpose fire extinguisher is provided at the stage. An Emergency Plan has been created to deal with emergencies such as fire.
Pedestrian hit by vehicle	5	1	5	Road closed 4 hours before event until 2 hours po event. Highways signs & cones used. Two Traffic Management Stewards in attendance throughout
Wildwood Alpacas				
Wildwood Alpacas have provided their own risk assessment for the event.				See separate risk assessment provided by compar they manage the risks of people petting the alpac .

The group will be situated in The Cobbles which is closed off to vehicle access for the duration				LSWA PC close the road where they are located to install crowd safety from vehicles
Child Protection				
Allegation from child or vulnerable adult	4	1	4	Stewards instructed not to be alone with children vulnerable adults at any time. A Lost child point i provided at the side of the stage, where the Head Steward (who is DBS checked) is stationed. Unaccompanied children at Father Christmas' grotto will be accompanied by an appropriate leader (who is DBS checked in absence of a paren Chairman and Clerk of the PC are DBS checked an will assist if required. St Marys academy PTA undertake the duty of organising the grotto and have a risk assessment in place
Coronavirus Covid-19	3	3	6	Appropriate steps must be installed to reduce the likelihood of an infectious disease circulating at the event. The event is held outdoors which has been proven to reduce transmission. All stall holders to provide and encourage the use of hand sanitiser . The stage to provide hand sanitizer and wipe (where possible) all items such as microphones that are used between people. Any events happening in conjunctio with the Christmas Lights Switch on (ie stalls in the church) should have their own risk assessment and consider the transmission of Covid-19. Further guidan may result in further interventions being reintroduce

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed…… Date: ……

Recruitment and Probationary period Procedure

1. Policy Statement

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council is dedicated to delivering high-quality services that are inclusive and accessible to all residents. The Council acknowledges that fostering inclusion begins with its approach to both current and prospective employees, workers, and volunteers.

To support this commitment, the Council upholds a set of core values—**Pride, Trust, Transparency, Positive Relationships, and Listening to People**—which guide behaviour and decision-making. These values are embedded in all recruitment and selection activities and apply equally to existing and future staff.

The Council strives to create a welcoming environment for all applicants, aiming to build a diverse, skilled, motivated, and effective workforce that reflects and understands the needs of the community. Regular reviews of equality monitoring data are conducted to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives.

Recognising the value of diverse teams, the Council is committed to attracting, appointing, and retaining the best candidates. This includes fostering a workforce that is representative of all aspects of society, including but not limited to: gender, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, age, race, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief (or no belief).

The Council also acknowledges intersectionality—where individuals may identify with multiple protected characteristics—and will adopt inclusive practices that seek to eliminate bias and promote fairness.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that recruitment and selection processes at Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council:

- Are based on the qualifications, skills, experience, and abilities required for the role.
- Are fair, consistent, efficient, and compliant with legal standards.
- Align with the Council's equality and diversity policy.
- Operate within approved staffing levels and budget constraints.
- Promote a positive image of the Council in accordance with its values.

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council.
- Elected members and partners involved in recruitment activities.

Separate procedures may be applied for agency staff, casual/relief workers, volunteers, and other workers as appropriate.

3. Principles

The following principles underpin the Council's recruitment and selection practices:

- Candidates will be assessed solely on their ability to perform the job.
- No assumptions will be made about who can perform certain types of work.
- Qualifications and experience requirements must be directly relevant to the role.
- Selection tests must be job-specific, regularly reviewed, and free from unjustifiable bias.

- Interview questions must relate to job requirements and reflect the Council's values.
- Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.
- In cases where internal candidates meet the essential criteria, they should be interviewed before external advertising. This is in accordance with a local agreement with UNISON.
- Recruitment arrangements must not place disabled candidates at a substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to eliminate or reduce such disadvantages.
- Selection panels must be chaired by an experienced recruiter who has completed appropriate training (*see Note 1).
- All staff involved in recruitment must adhere to this policy and the Council's equality and safeguarding policies.
- External recruitment agencies or consultants must be provided with copies of these policies.

4. Protected Characteristics

This policy supports and protects individuals across the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

5. Equality and Positive Action

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. Where there has been little or no representation from specific groups (e.g., gender or ethnic minorities) in a particular role over the past year, the Council may implement **positive action** measures to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

It is important to distinguish **positive action** from **positive discrimination**. While the Council may take steps to attract a broader range of candidates, all appointments must be made strictly on merit. Positive discrimination—such as selecting a candidate solely based on a protected characteristic—is not permitted under this policy.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Parish Clerk/Manager

- Holds overall responsibility for recruitment and selection across the Council.

HR Committee

- Maintains and reviews the recruitment and selection policy and procedures.
- Advises on the application of the policy and supports appointment panels.

- Responds to recruitment-related complaints.
- Oversees job grading, interview panel guidance, selection testing, job advertising, pre-employment checks, contract issuance, diversity monitoring, and policy compliance.

Managers

- Responsible for implementing the policy and ensuring their teams comply with its provisions.

Clerk/Chair of the Recruitment Panel

Responsible for: a. Understanding and applying this policy and procedure.
b. Ensuring the recruitment panel adheres to best practices.
c. Preparing job advertisements, descriptions, specifications, and approvals.
d. Leading shortlisting and interview processes.
e. Maintaining confidentiality of applicant information.
f. Verifying employment and qualification documentation.
g. Recording interview outcomes via the online recruitment system.
h. Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

7. Relevant Legislation

The Council's recruitment practices are governed by the **Equality Act 2010**, which prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination during recruitment. Protected characteristics under this legislation include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Revised 2014)

The Council supports the reintegration of ex-offenders into the workforce. In line with the law, applicants are not required to disclose **spent convictions**—those that are no longer legally required to be disclosed after a rehabilitation period.

- Spent convictions typically include sentences under 48 months and certain cautions.
- Some convictions, such as those involving sentences over 48 months or public protection orders, are **never spent**.
- Certain roles require disclosure under the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**. In such cases, recruiting managers must consult HR Services.
- Any indication of dishonesty during recruitment must be referred to HR Services before proceeding with an offer.

8. Fluency Duty

Under **Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016**, public-facing roles must meet appropriate standards of spoken English. Where applicable, job adverts and descriptions must clearly state fluency requirements. (See Appendix 1 for further guidance.)

9. Variations

- **Urgent Appointments**: In cases of urgent business need, Assistant Directors and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) may authorise short-term appointments (under 12 months) via agencies or the Council's casual register. Procurement rules, budget checks, and pre-employment checks still apply.
- **Reconsideration of Previous Applicants**: Candidates who were previously interviewed but not appointed may be considered for similar roles (same grade and requirements) within 12 months without a full recruitment process.
- **Conversion of Fixed-Term Roles**: Employees who have completed a fixed-term or secondment role may be offered a permanent position (same grade) without re-advertising, provided they:
    - Successfully complete probation,
    - Demonstrate consistent performance and attendance,
    - Meet all objectives to a high standard,
    - Participate in a satisfactory development discussion signed off by their line manager.

9. Applications

- Applications should be submitted using Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council's official application form. CVs may be accepted if they contain all the required information outlined in the form.
- Late applications will only be considered if shortlisting has not yet commenced. This decision rests with the Recruiting Manager or Chair of the Panel.

10. Shortlisting, Interviewing, and Scoring

- Applications are assessed solely against the **essential criteria** listed in the person specification.
- All members of the interview panel should normally participate in the shortlisting process.
- Only candidates who clearly demonstrate that they meet all essential criteria will typically be invited to interview.
- Where qualifications are unclear or potentially equivalent, clarification should be sought from the relevant academic authority.
- Shortlisting decisions must be documented using the online recruitment system.
- The Council is committed to interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria.
- For all protected characteristics, the Council will engage in dialogue with candidates to address any barriers and offer reasonable adjustments. Examples include:
    - Use of interpreters
    - Alternative formats for applications
    - Adjustments to the interview process

- If a large number of candidates meet the essential criteria, a **longlisting** or **pre-interview selection process** may be used. This may include:
    - Online assessments
    - Telephone or virtual interviews
    - Reserve listing of qualified candidates
- All assessments, questions, and candidate responses must be recorded in the online recruitment system.
- Applicants not contacted within **7 working days** of the closing date should assume they were unsuccessful. However, they may request feedback from the Chair of the Selection Panel.
- Internal candidates must be personally contacted by managers regarding outcomes and offered feedback.

11. Pre-Employment Checks

- In exceptional cases, employment may begin before all checks are completed, but only with approval from HR Services. In such cases:
    - A **fixed-term contract** must be issued.
    - The contract must clearly state that permanent employment is subject to satisfactory completion of all checks.
- The Council reserves the right to terminate employment if references, qualifications, or other checks are unsatisfactory.
- All appointments are subject to a **3-month and/or 6-month probationary period**, during which performance and conduct will be reviewed.
- Any deviations from this process must be pre-approved by HR Services.

12. Conditional Offers of Employment

Once a suitable candidate is identified and documentation verified, a **conditional offer** (verbal and/or written) may be made by the HR Committee or designated managers.

- Verbal offers may constitute a legal contract. Therefore, it must be clearly stated that the offer is **conditional**, subject to: a. Two satisfactory references, including one from the current or most recent employer (or academic reference for school/college leavers). References must be professional, not personal. b. Satisfactory medical clearance from the Council's Occupational Health provider. c. DBS clearance at the appropriate level, if required for the role. d. Verification of all essential qualifications, including professional registrations or licenses.

Any variations to this process must be approved in advance by HR Services.

13. Written Records and Data Protection

- All applicant personal data will be handled in accordance with current data protection legislation.
- Information relating to the **successful candidate** will be retained in their personnel file.
- Information relating to **unsuccessful applicants** will be securely retained for **12 months** following the conclusion of the recruitment process and then securely destroyed.

- Under the **Data Protection Act**, applicants have the right to request access to any records held about them during the recruitment process.

14. Monitoring and Review

- This policy and procedure will be **periodically reviewed** by HR Committee to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- Routine updates (e.g., formatting, hyperlinks, form references) will be agreed with the **HR Committee and/or Full Council**.
- Any **material changes** to the policy or procedure will be made in consultation with the HR Committee and approved by Full Council.

Section Three – Recruitment Templates / Forms / Guidance

(Refer to internal documentation for access to templates and guidance materials.)

Appendix One – Fluency Duty under the Immigration Act 2016

Overview

Under **Part 7, Section 80** of the **Immigration Act 2016**, public authorities must ensure that customer-facing staff are sufficiently fluent in spoken English (or Welsh in Wales) to perform their duties effectively. This requirement is supported by a statutory **Code of Practice**.

Refer to: Code of Practice – English Language Requirement for Public Sector Workers

Scope

- This duty applies to all **customer-facing roles**.
- It does **not** require staff to speak only English or Welsh, nor does it restrict the use of other languages where appropriate.

Determining a Customer-Facing Role

A role may be considered customer-facing if it involves:

- Regular and essential interaction with the public.
- Frequent communication via face-to-face, telephone, or other means.
- A need for clear, responsive spoken communication.
- Duties that require spoken English or Welsh to be performed effectively.

Examples of Customer-Facing Roles

- Receptionists or front-line customer service staff
- Grounds or caretaking staff with regular community interaction
- Teaching assistants or support workers in local education initiatives

Examples of Non-Customer-Facing Roles

- Administrative staff providing internal support
- Groundskeepers or maintenance staff without regular public contact

Fluency Expectations

- Fluency means the ability to speak **clearly, confidently, and accurately**, appropriate to the role.
- It does **not** relate to accent, dialect, speech impediments, or tone.

- Managers must assess fluency requirements when drafting job descriptions and person specifications.
- Where applicable, fluency requirements should be clearly stated in job adverts and selection criteria.

Sign Language Considerations

- For roles where the employee's first language is **British Sign Language (BSL)** or another signed language, fluency requirements may be met with the use of a **qualified interpreter**.

Existing Employees

If an existing employee does not meet the fluency requirement for a revised or new role:

- The Council will provide appropriate **training or support**.
- All changes will be managed with **sensitivity and fairness**.

Handling Complaints

Legitimate complaints under the fluency duty include:

- Concerns from the public about a staff member's ability to communicate effectively in English (or Welsh).

Complaints **not** considered legitimate include those based on:

- Accent, nationality, manner, tone, or origin of the employee.

All complaints will be reviewed fairly and in compliance with equalities legislation.

Probationary Employees Procedure

1.0 Purpose and Scope

This procedure outlines the process for confirming employment or dismissing probationary employees at Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council.

All new employees are subject to a **six-month probationary period**, during which confirmation of employment depends on satisfactory performance. The **Parish Council Clerk/Manager**, or the **Assistant Clerk** in their absence, is responsible for monitoring performance, maintaining standards, and keeping the employee informed throughout the probationary period. They must also gather relevant input from team leaders or supervisors to form a well-informed assessment.

2.0 Principles

- During probation, employees must demonstrate their suitability for the role.
- The probationary period may be extended in certain circumstances. Until formal written confirmation of satisfactory performance is received, the probation period should be considered ongoing.
- Employees have the **right to be accompanied** by a work colleague or trade union representative at all stages of the procedure.
- Members of the **Human Resource Committee** are not typically involved in review meetings unless requested by either party. However, HR will attend meetings where an extension or dismissal is being considered.
- Records of all meetings must be maintained and shared with HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel file. These records should include:
    - Invitation letters
    - Manager's comments or observations

- Meeting notes (including employee input)
- Action points

- Employees may request copies of these records.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Interim Review Meeting

- A **line manager** (e.g., supervisor, team leader, Head of Service, or Management Team member) will conduct an initial review **three months** after the employee's start date.
- The employee will be invited to an **Interim Review Meeting** to discuss progress.
- If performance is unsatisfactory, concerns must be documented and shared with the employee in advance.
- Following the meeting, the manager will provide a written summary, including:
  - Outcome of the meeting
  - Areas for improvement
  - Timeframes and action points
- The **Probationary Review Form** should be used where helpful.
- All documentation must be forwarded to HR for recordkeeping.

3.2 Final Review Meeting

- Near the end of the probationary period, a **Review Meeting** will be held between the manager and employee to determine whether employment will be confirmed.
- If performance is deemed unsatisfactory, concerns must be documented and shared with the employee prior to the meeting.
- After the meeting, HR will notify the employee in writing of the decision:
  - **Extension of probation**
  - **Dismissal**
- The employee will be informed of their **right to appeal**.

3.3 Appeal Procedure

- Employees dismissed due to unsuitability have the right to appeal to the **Parish Council Clerk/Manager**.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing, stating the grounds for appeal.
- The appeal will be heard by the **Parish Council Clerk/Manager** and the **Chairman of the Human Resource Committee**.
- The decision of the Parish Council Clerk/Manager is **final**.

Possible outcomes:

- **Appeal Dismissed**
- **Appeal Partly Allowed**: Probation extended

- **Appeal Allowed**: Appointment confirmed or fixed-term contract completed

4.0 Complaints During the Probationary Period

If an employee raises a complaint related to probationary dismissal, the **Council's grievance procedure does not apply**. Instead, the manager will:

- Address the complaint within the probationary procedure
- Act fairly, promptly, and with due consideration
- Consider suspending the dismissal process temporarily
- Decide whether another manager should handle the complaint or continue the probationary process

Adopted: September 2025

Signed…….. Chairman……..

Meeting closed at pm

Council Attendance

Date	RN	JH	MS	WM	DW	DH	Sue W	JF	AA	VR	MG	Total Attendance
22/5/245	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
10/7/245	X	X	Ap	X	X	X	X	Ap	-	X	Ap	7
4/9/25												
16/10/25												
6/12/25												

Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications when exercising its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions and to do all that is reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder

in its area. Where relevant any decisions made at the Parish Council meeting have taken this duty of Care into consideration