

## **Bewerley Parish Council.**

### **Standing Order No 3: Council Policy Statements.**

**1. Freedom of Information Act.** The final phase of the Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. The Council agreed the Mandatory Communication Scheme in 2009.

Requirements of the Act. The Act gives applicants two related rights;

- The right to be told whether the information exists, and
- The right to receive the information.

The Act is retrospective and states that requests must be made in writing; that it will not be necessary to comply with repeated or vexatious requests; that all requests not covered by exemptions should be answered within 20 working days; that a charge may be made and that where possible information should be provided in the manner requested, eg copy, summary, or allowing inspection.

Mandatory Communication Scheme. The Scheme lists the categories of information held by the Council and in what format, and includes; Minutes, Standing Orders, Annual Report, Declarations of Acceptance of Office, Registers of Interests, Clerks conditions of employment, Planning documents, Records of Audit and Accounts, Agendas and Council papers, Play Ground Inspection records, Newsletters and Policy Statements.

Policy on dealing with press. The Chairperson or Clerk are authorised to contact the press on behalf of Council. However extreme care should be exercised. Press releases, other than minute and agenda distribution, should be checked with the Deputy Chairperson prior to release. Individual councillors should not contact the press on Council business without authorisation from Council.

**2. Diversity and Equalities.** Bewerley Parish Council acknowledges the general duty placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Age Discrimination Act 2006 and Equality Act 2010 and confirms that it is committed to achieving the aims of these acts in its service and management practises, and to promoting equality of opportunity.

The Parish Council will continue, within its functions and policies, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, colour, religion, gender, age, sexuality, mental health, physical and sensory impairment .

The Parish Council values the differences and cultural diversity that people bring to the Council and confirms that all concerned with the Council have a responsibility to monitor their practises and take positive steps where necessary to implement this policy.

**3. Health, Safety and Environmental Policy.** Bewerley Parish Council recognises the responsibility it has to its members, employees, the public and others for protecting their health and safety and the wider environment. The Council's policy is to conduct its operations according to the following principles;

- Compliance with all relevant health, safety and environmental regulations.
- Identification, Management and Control of Risks.
- To give encouragement to suppliers and contractors to adopt similar standards.

All councillors and employees of the Council have a duty to conform to, and implement these policies, to adopt safe working practises and to identify and report any hazards.

**4. Risk Assessments (Audit Regulations).** The Council agrees to undertake an annual Risk Assessment to review practises and ensure;

- That appropriate risks are adequately covered by insurance.
- That Internal Controls are adequate, and regularly monitored, and
- That other outside risks have been identified and covered.

**5. Parish Council Complaints Procedure.** If any member of the public has a complaint about the administration or procedures of the council, or about a councillor or a council employee it should be handled as follows;

- If a complaint is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk it should if possible be dealt with forthwith.
- If the complainant is not satisfied he should be advised to put it in writing to the clerk, or Chairperson.
- The clerk or Chairperson (except where the complaint is about his own actions) shall try to settle the complaint directly. If the complaint is about the behaviour of another councillor or the clerk the person complained of should be given an opportunity of commenting on the manner in which it is intended to settle the complaint. The clerk or Chairperson shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action.
- Where a written complaint is received about the clerk or Chairperson he shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
- The clerk or Chairperson shall bring any complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council, and the clerk shall inform the complainant of the date when it will be considered. The Council shall consider whether the

circumstances warrant the complaint being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

- As soon as possible after a decision is taken it, and the nature of any action, shall be notified to the complainant in writing.

**Standing Order No 3 was adopted at the Meeting held on May 2015**