**Governance of Ogbourne St Andrew Parish Council**

Since 1894 parish councils have been able to exercise functions and powers specifically conferred on them by legislation or by arrangement with another local authority. Importantly, as with any body corporate, a parish council can only do that which it is authorised to do by statute. It must not do anything which it is prohibited to do by statute.

**Back to Basics:**

Effective governance checks are in place to ensure that the decisions and actions of a local authority are lawful and transparent to the public at large and local council taxpayers who have a vested interest in the activities of their parish council. The legal requirements include:

• Public and advance notice of meetings of a parish council.

• Meetings of a parish council being open to the public.

• Regulation of the transaction of the business and the meetings of a parish council by appropriate standing orders.

• Procedures for voting on any decision which need to be made by a parish council.

• Opportunities to delegate functions or powers of a parish council to a committee or subcommittee (with clear and unambiguous terms of reference) or an employee of the council or to another local authority. Arrangements by a parish council to delegate should be formally decided and evidenced.

• Access to minutes of meetings and accounts of a parish council.

• Strict control and regulation of the council’s financial affairs.

• Regulation of the individual conduct of councillors who are elected, appointed, or co-opted to a parish council.

• Regulation of the conduct of staff who are employed by a parish council.

**Governance**

To give effect to good governance a parish council should commit time to producing and annually reviewing, their governance documents. These documents set the environment in which a parish council is expected to discharge its duties and powers. They constitute the internal rules, practical arrangements and processes which are essential to those who form and work for the council.

A parish council’s governance documents should be readily available for inspection, whether on a website or local notice board, and parish councillors and employees should be able to demonstrate compliance with its governing documents in relation to all its activities, decisions, and decision-making processes.

Core governing documents for parish councils comprise for example:

• Standing Orders for the conduct and transaction of business at meetings of the council (and any of its committees and sub committees)

• Clear written terms of reference for committees and sub committees which evidence the nature and extent of the duties or powers which have been delegated.

• Arrangements for inspection of minutes and accounts by residents.

• Standing orders and arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.

• Standing orders for entering contracts.

• The code of conduct adopted by the council which Councillors must observe.

• Arrangements for access to information held by the council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as well as the Data protection Act and the GDPR.

• Arrangements for handling complaints.

An annual review of its governing documents or amended as procedures or the law changes.

Ogbourne St Andrew Parish Council Constitution

Refer to Annex A, Required as part of our Bid for funding.

Over the next few months, I shall, with your assistance be drafting the Governance for our parish, including the Standing Orders on how we do our business, Charitable donations and Project Funding. Once this work has been completed, we will we be a legally compliant and be able to move onto other areas.

**With immediate effect for Parish Meetings: On Receipt of an Agenda:**

**Disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests.**

“To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. (email, Letter)

If you become aware, during a meeting, of an interest that has not been disclosed under this item you must immediately disclose it.

You may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is prejudicial.

A personal interest is prejudicial, if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and it relates to a financial or regulatory matter.” (Puts in a complaint)