MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk & RFO: Tanya West Tel: 07770 679697 or Email: clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
VAT Registration Number: 296 9715 35 / Website: www.marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of a Governance & Management Advisory Group (GAMAG) Meeting held on Tuesday 30th June 2026 at 7.15pm in the Old School, Church Street, Market Lavington

Present:
Councillors: Di Fraser; Duncan Poole; Chloe Stevens (Chair).

Officers: Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO

Public: No members of the public.

It was advised that the meeting would be recorded by the Parish Clerk, to aid with the writing of the minutes. The recording would be deleted after the approval of the written minutes.

The GAMAG is an advisory body of the Council and does not have delegated decision-making powers; its role is to consider matters referred to it and to make recommendations to Full Council for decision. This is reflected throughout these minutes.

G&M-035-300626 Election of Chair
Continuing on the previous agreement to have a rotational Chair for this group, Cllr Stevens chaired the meeting.

G&M-036-300626 Attendance and Apologies for Absence
Attendance and apologies were noted as follows:
Absent with apology – Cllrs Fred Davis; Peter Joly; Ian Macqueen; Lesley Quigley; Laura Turner-Scott.
Absent without apology – Cllr Suzanne Morrison.

G&M-037-300626 Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest or potential conflicts of interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda were raised.

G&M-038-300626 Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes)
As there were not any members of the public present, the meeting was not adjourned.

G&M-039-300626 Notes from the Last Meeting
The minutes of the GAMAG meeting held on 12th May 2026 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted they had already been accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting at the Full Council meeting on 19th May 2026.

G&M-040-300626 Terms of Reference
The Clerk reminded the Group that it is standard practice for the Terms of Reference of each committee and advisory group to be reviewed at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council, and that amendments (including the requirement for a minimum of three councillors to be physically present) had already been made at the previous meeting. No further amendments were proposed.

G&M-041-300626 Data Protection and AI
The Clerk updated the Group following her attendance at a WALC webinar [delivered by Breakthrough Communications] on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its implications for data protection in local councils. A recording of the webinar was awaited which would be circulated to councillors once received.

The Clerk advised that NALC and WALC have not yet issued model guidance or a template policy, and that parish councils are making increasing use of AI. Having researched available examples, the Clerk had identified a concise, traffic-light style template (based on that used by another parish council) which she considered more practical for the Council's purposes than more lengthy alternatives. The template addresses the safe use of AI tools, including that personal or identifiable information should not be entered into non-subscription AI tools and should be anonymised or redacted where AI assistance is used.
The Group discussed the merits of putting an interim policy in place now, on the basis that a simple policy could readily be reviewed and refined once further sector guidance becomes available, rather than waiting for NALC/WALC to publish a template.

Agreed Actions:
- That the Clerk adapt the identified template to produce a policy specific to Market Lavington Parish Council.
- To recommend to Full council that the resulting AI and Data Protection Policy be approved.
- That the Clerk circulate a copy of the information and recording of the AI webinar to councillors once received.

G&M-042-300626 Policies and Governance Documents

a) **Progress Update**
The Clerk reported that the Terms of Reference of all Council committees and advisory groups have now been amalgamated into a single overarching document, sitting alongside a master register of all Council policies and strategic documents. Each committee or advisory group continues to review its own Terms of Reference annually, feeding into the master register. The Clerk had circulated to the Group, in advance of the meeting, a list of the policies and documents falling within GAMAG's remit (including some that overlap with the Staffing and Finance Committees), together with the review priorities agreed a year previously. The Information Technology and Email Policy had already been reviewed and updated since that list was drawn up.
The Clerk proposed that, where documents currently name the postholder (e.g. who is the appointed Clerk or Chair) rather than the role, they be amended to refer generically to “Clerk” and “Chair”, so that documents do not require amendment each time a postholder changes. It was confirmed that correspondence would continue to be received via a single monitoring mailbox and forwarded to the relevant postholder as required, and that published information identifying the current Chair (e.g. on the website) would be unaffected.
Agreed Actions:
That the Clerk amend those polices that refer to postholders by name rather than by role.

b) **Review Priorities**
The Group considered any requests to amend the current review schedule and determined whether any strategic documents or policies should be reprioritised within the programme.
It was agreed that the Risk Register, previously a lower priority, should be brought forward for review as a matter of priority, given the volume of information it contains and its relevance to the Council's annual audit.
Regarding Standing Orders, the Clerk advised that the National Association of Local Councils' model standing orders have been updated since the Council's current Standing Orders were last reviewed, and that a full comparison against the updated model would be needed. The Group agreed that a full review was not practicable within the time available at this meeting, and that the priority areas identified below be brought forward for recommendation to Full Council, with the balance of the document to be reviewed against the updated model in due course.
Agreed Actions:

That the Risk Register be reprioritised for review as set out below, and that Standing Orders be reviewed in the priority areas identified below, with a fuller review against the updated NALC model to follow.

c) **Policy Review**
The Group reviewed the policies and strategic documents identified as the highest priority, taking into account comments submitted by councillors in advance of the meeting. The following was agreed:

Code of Conduct
The Group noted the Code of Conduct was adopted, based on the Local Government Association model, in June 2024. No substantive changes were proposed; the Group being satisfied that the policy remains fit for purpose and that relevant legislation has not changed. It was agreed that the policy be amended to reflect that relevant training may be obtained not only from the local authority but also from NALC/WALC and other appropriate third parties.
Agreed Actions:
- Recommend to Full Council that the Code of Conduct be re-adopted for a further period, subject to the amendment to the training provisions noted above.
- The Clerk to amend the Code of Conduct document regarding training provision and circulate to all councillors prior to Full Council approval.

Equality & Diversity Policy
The Group compared the Council's current policy with the NALC template and was satisfied that the existing policy remains appropriate and has previously been accepted without issue in grant funding applications. No changes were proposed other than updating the review date.
Agreed Actions:
- Recommend to Full Council that the Equality & Diversity Policy be re-adopted without substantive amendment.

Information Technology and Email Policy
The Group noted this policy had already been reviewed and updated earlier in the year and required no further action at this time.

Risk Register
The Group reviewed the Risk Register in detail and agreed the following amendments for onward recommendation:
- Item 1 (lack of forward planning and budgetary controls): this item needs to reference the new projects and associated budgetary process that is now in place.
- Item 3 (loss of key staff): to be updated to reference the standing committee arrangements now in place to provide cover in the event of loss of the Clerk, and to reference the confidential access/password arrangements held for this purpose, neither of which is currently reflected in the register.
- Item 8 (accurate and timely reporting of council business in the minutes): the likelihood rating to be increased from Medium to High, reflecting the increased volume of Council business and the resulting demands on the Clerk's time.
- Item 13 (failure to register members' interests): to be reviewed in light of a recent change in legislation regarding publication of the Register of Interests (see Minute G&M-043 below); the Clerk to update the register accordingly.
- Item 15 (damage to public property (vandalism)): the current rating of Low to be reviewed in light of recent incidents of vandalism to Council assets, including recently funded equipment and benches; the Group considered a rating of Medium more appropriate.

- Item 20 (failure to use grants for their intended purpose): to be updated to reflect the Council's improved processes [the Group noted with thanks that funding recently applied for by Cllr Fraser had been confirmed].
- Item 21 (keeping proper financial records in accordance with statutory requirements): the responsible person references the Chair of the M&F Committee, which no longer exists and has been replaced by GAMAG and the Finance Committee.
- Item 22(IT failure):this item should refer to the process in place and how to locate necessary procedure.

Agreed Actions:

- ➢ The Clerk to incorporate all the suggested amendments into the Risk Register, highlighting them in a different colour for ease of identification in readiness for their approval at the next Full Council meeting.
- ➢ Recommend to Full Council that the amended Risk Register be approved, and that Full Council be given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendments before adoption.

Standing Orders

The Group considered the priority amendments identified by the Clerk arising from the updated NALC model standing orders:

- Article 14 (Code of Conduct complaints): to be updated to reflect the current model wording on the action the Council may take on notification of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights, noting that such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.
- Article 18 (financial controls and procurement): to be updated so that the procurement threshold is defined by reference to the current statutory threshold, rather than a fixed figure, as this threshold is subject to annual government review.
- References throughout to “the Old School, Highways, HRAF, Planning and Finance Committees” (e.g. in the provisions on reporting and circulation of minutes) to be replaced with a generic reference to “Standing Committees”, so that the document does not require amendment if committee arrangements change.

The Group was satisfied, having reviewed the document in detail at a previous meeting, that no further substantive changes were required to the remaining provisions at this time.

Agreed Actions:

- ➢ Recommend to Full Council that the amendments to Standing Orders set out above be approved.
- ➢ The Clerk to amend the Standing Orders appropriately and circulate to all councillors prior to Full Council approval.

New / Suggested Policies

The Group noted, for future consideration, the following documents identified by the Clerk as recommended documents to be included within a Parish Councils strategic register.

- New Councillor Induction Process (the Clerk advised that an informal, phased process is already in use, issuing information to new councillors in stages to avoid overloading them). Cllr Fraser advised that she had retained the copies of the email and information provided to her by the previous Clerk when she was first appointed, which could be used as a basis for this policy.
- Model Councillor/Officer Protocol which provides guidance on specific roles & responsibilities;
- Community Engagement Policy, which it was noted would in due course supersede the current Social Media Policy when that is next reviewed later in 2026.

Agreed Actions:

- ➢ Cllr Fraser to provide a copy of the email to the Clerk for New Councillor Induction.
- ➢ The Clerk to obtain relevant information and examples of these suggested new policies for consideration and review at a future meeting.

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G&M-043-300626 **Other Governance & Management Matters**

Members were invited to raise any additional governance or management matters for information only.

The Clerk advised that Wiltshire Council has notified parish and town councils of a change in legislation concerning the Register of Members' Interests: councillors may now elect for their home address to be published on the public register, whereas previously this information must have been disclosed and made available to the public. Councillors who do wish their home address to be published must confirm this in writing. The Clerk had prepared a revised consent form; the Group agreed this should be circulated to all councillors in advance of, and completed at, the next Full Council meeting.

Agreed Actions:

The Clerk circulate the revised Register of Interests consent form to all councillors ahead of the next Full Council meeting, for completion at that meeting.

G&M-044-300626 **Items for Next Agenda**

The following items were identified for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Review of the Community Emergency Plan, which was noted to contain out-of-date names, telephone numbers and addresses and to not currently be available on the Council's website in its most recent form.
- Provision for “cold spaces” during periods of extreme heat, including consideration of accessibility issues raised in connection with using the church as a cold space, and arrangements for maintaining emergency equipment (e.g. generators).
- The designation and formal status of the Council's emergency hub arrangements, including engagement with the Community Hall [to be included in discussions at the next JLC meeting].

G&M-045-300626 **Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes)**

As there were not any members of the public present, the meeting was not adjourned.

G&M-046-300626 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council would be held on Tuesday 21st July 2026 at 7.15pm at the Old School.

Also, that the next meeting of the GAMAG is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 29th September 2026 at 7.15pm at the Old School.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.15pm.

Signed………………………………………………………. Date…………………………………………