

Wymeswold Parish Council and Burial Board

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1. Meetings:

The meetings of Wymeswold Parish Council (the Council) shall be held at such places, on such dates and at such times as may be fixed by Council. There will be 11 meetings in the year which will be held monthly (except for August where there is no meeting), and will normally be on the first Monday of the month at 7.00 pm. Any change to the date or time of the meeting must be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair, and all Councillors must be given at least 7 days' notice of such a change..

- a. **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b. **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c. **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- d. **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.** If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chair may, after warning, order that they leave the meeting.
- e. The public will be given an opportunity to speak at the beginning of a meeting in line with the agenda, after the meeting is opened by the Chair. The period designated for public participation at a meeting shall be 15 minutes unless directed by the Chair. Where several people attend for the same issue or purpose, one representative of the group should be selected by the group to speak on behalf of the whole group. Where a member wishes to give a presentation or speech to the Council this will normally be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes, albeit that the Chair may allow an overrun at their discretion. A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- f. In addition, the Chair may at their discretion and at a convenient time in the transaction of the business adjourn the meeting to allow any members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.
- g. All requests put to or made of the Council by members of the public shall be recorded in the minutes, and any decisions given, or actions agreed as a consequence will be recorded. The names of members of the public attending meetings and/or raising issues at the meeting or in writing shall be recorded in

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the minutes only if verbal or written consent is given to the Council by those members of the public it concerns.

- h. Subject to standing order 1(i), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- i. A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- j. The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- k. Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in their absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- l. The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a Councillor as chosen by the Councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- m. Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- n. The Chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**
- o. Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- p. A Councillor or a non-Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council’s Code of Conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory**

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limitations or restrictions under the Code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.

- q. Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer (Clerk) as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- r. A dispensation may be granted if: without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business; granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- s. **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- t. **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted**, and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- u. Meetings shall be scheduled to end at 9.00 pm. Any unfinished business will be deferred to the following meeting and placed on the next agenda..

2. Committees and Sub-Committees:

- a. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a Committee may appoint a sub-Committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the Committee.**
- b. **The members of a Committee may include non-Councillors unless it is a Committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c. **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory Committee and a sub-Committee of the advisory Committee may be non-Councillors.**

3. Rules of Debate at Meetings:

- a. Items on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.

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- b. An item (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c. An item on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d. An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to an item. It shall not negate the item.
- e. An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the Chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the Chair.
- f. Items on the agenda requiring a decision should normally be circulated as a document to all Councillors alongside the agenda prior to the meeting. Councillors are expected to read the circulated document so they can formulate an opinion.
- g. One or more amendments to items on the agenda may be raised by a Councillor and may be discussed together if the Chair considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted on separately.
- h. Resolutions on procedural matters may be approved without notice, including those to vary the order of business on the grounds of urgency or procedural efficiency.

4. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings:

- a. All Councillors must observe the Members' Code of Conduct that was agreed by the Council.
- b. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this occurs, the Chair shall request such person(s) to improve their conduct and can exclude such person(s) from the meeting.
- c. If this is ignored, the Chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or progress the meeting. This may include suspending or closing the meeting.
- d. If a member reasonably believes another member is in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, that member is under a duty to report the breach to the Monitoring Officer of the District Council.
- e. Upon notification by the District Council that a Councillor has breached the

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Council's Code of Conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

5. Ordinary Council Meetings:

- a. **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the Councillors elected take office.**
- b. **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c. **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d. **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e. **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f. **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g. **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h. **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i. **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j. **Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, in an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council and Councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year**

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which is not an election year, delivery by the Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.

6. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council:

- a. The Chair of the Council may convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council at any time.** The summons shall be signed by the Chair.
- b. If the Chair of the Council does not call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two Councillors, any two Councillors may convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.** The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two Councillors.

7. Voting on Appointments:

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the Chair exercising their casting vote.

8. Items for a Meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer (Clerk):

- a.** An item shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b.** No item may be discussed at a meeting unless it is on the agenda. Written notice of an item to be placed on the agenda must be given the Clerk at least a week prior to the agenda being published.
- c.** If the wording or subject of a proposed item is considered improper, the Clerk shall consult with the Chair, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- d.** The decision of the Clerk as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

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9. Draft Minutes:

- a. If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on Councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b. **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- c. Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 9(b) and standing order 19(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

10. Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes from the previous meeting, if approved by the Council as an accurate record must be signed by the Chair of the meeting. Corrections to the previous meeting's minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chair. The minutes should record in summary form sufficient detail to clarify the nature of the debate and resolution made and is not a verbatim account.

The minutes of a Council meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- a. the time and place of the meeting.
- b. the names of Councillors who are present and the names of Councillors who are absent.
- c. interests that have been declared by Councillors.
- d. the grant of dispensations (if any) to Councillors.
- e. whether a Councillor left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered.
- f. if there was a public participation session.
- g. the resolutions made.

11. Management of Information:

- a. **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and**

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organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.

- b. **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c. **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d. **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. Code of Conduct and Dispensations:

- a All Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council's Code of Conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or Committee or sub-Committee for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other

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interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;

- ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
- iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
- iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 12(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:

- i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
- ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
- iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

13. Code of Conduct Complaints:

- a. Upon notification by the Principal Council that a Councillor or non-Councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

14. Proper Officer:

The Proper Officer shall be either the Clerk or other staff nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when they are absent.

The Proper Officer (Clerk) shall:

At least three clear days before a meeting of the Council, a Committee or a Sub-Committee,

- a. serve on Councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email), and**
- b. Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and**

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agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council convened by Councillors is signed by them).

- c. Include on the agenda all items in the order received.
- d. Convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office.
- e. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- f. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities.**
- g. Hold Acceptance of Office forms from Councillors
- h. Hold a copy of every Councillor's Register of Members Interests. These are published on the District Council's website and a link to them will be placed on the village website.
- i. To take and keep proper records of all Council meetings (minutes).
- j. Assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- k. Liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer.
- l. Receive and send correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary.
- m. Arrange the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its Financial Regulations.
- n. Refer planning applications received by the Council to the Councillors promptly to facilitate an Extraordinary Meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next Council meeting.
- o. Assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of, and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).
- p. Arrange for legal deeds to be executed.
- q. Sign each new Grant of Right of Burial document for Wymeswold Cemetery and obtain 2 Councillor's signatures on the same document.

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15. Responsible Financial Officer:

- a. The Council shall appoint an appropriate staff member to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

16. Accounts and Accounting Statements:

- a. "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b. All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c. The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each Councillor as soon as practicable after 30th June, 30th September and 31st December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported andwhich includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d. As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31st March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e. The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments) for the year to 31st March. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the Annual Governance Statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30th June.

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17. Financial Controls and Procurement:

The Council shall consider and approve Financial Regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which should include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

- a. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls.
- b. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council.
- c. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually.
- d. the inspection and copying by Councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts.

Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose. These regulations are contained in the separate WPC Financial Regulations document.

Subject to additional requirements in the Financial Regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:

- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
- ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting Councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
- iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing or by email addressed to the Proper Officer;
- iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
- v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council.
- vi. Neither the Council, nor a Committee or a Sub-Committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- vii. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must**

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consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

18. Handling Staff Matters:

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of Council is subject to standing order 11.
- b Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's member of staff shall notify the Chair, or if they are not available, the Vice-Chair of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Council at its next meeting.
- c The Chair of the Council or in their absence, the Vice-Chair shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the Council.
- d Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's member of staff shall contact the Chair or in their absence, the Vice-Chair in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the Chair or Vice-Chair, this shall be communicated to another Councillor, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Council.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

19. Responsibilities to provide information:

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b. [If gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000] **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

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20. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation:

- a. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b. The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**
- c. The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d. The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e. The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f. The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

21. Relations with the Press/Media:

Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its Councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

22. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds:

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b Subject to standing order 22(a), any two Councillors may sign on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

23. Communicating with District and County Councillors:

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the Councillor(s) of the District and County Council representing the area of the Council.

They may be permitted to speak at the Council meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

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24. Restrictions on Councillor Activities:

- a. Unless duly authorised no Councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

25. Standing Orders in General:

- a. All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b. Any motion to add to, vary or revoke one or more of the Council's Standing Orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall when proposed and seconded by a Councillor, be adjourned to the next Council meeting and be an item on that subsequent agenda.
- c. The Clerk shall provide a copy of the Council's Standing Orders to each Councillor as soon as possible following any update, or upon election to the Council.
- d. The decision of the Chair of a meeting as to the application of Standing Orders at the meeting shall be final.
- e. If, in approving a quote for works by a contractor, the Council deems it a requirement to request Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information, it may do so from that contractor.
- f. If a course of action is needed to be taken without delay outside of a Council meeting (eg. contacting the police, arranging execution of urgent repairs to Council premises), this can be dealt with by the Clerk or a Councillor with reference to Section 5.18(a) and Section 6.9(ii) of the Wymeswold Parish Council Financial Regulations document.

The Wymeswold Parish Council and Burial Board Procedural Standing Orders Policy was updated and approved at the Wymeswold Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 6th May 2025.

Next Policy Review date (unless statutory updates are required beforehand) May 2026.