LONG NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS

1. Councillors

1.1 Following election or co-option to the Council, each Councillor will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and other relevant information regarding the Council, including Social Media Policy. They will sign the form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk of the Council. They will also complete the Register of Interests and will inform the Clerk of any future changes.

1.2 All Councillors will observe the Code of Conduct at all times when on Council business and no member will act in such a way that will bring the Council into disrepute, behave offensively in meetings or obstruct the Council's business.

1.3 Councillors will declare any Pecuniary interests or other interests in an item for discussion at a Council meeting. Councillors will declare such interests and the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity.

1.4 On receipt of a written application from a councillors, the Council may grant a dispensation to them to speak and (if agreed by the Council) to vote on a matter in which they have an interest. The Council will record in the minutes the details of the dispensation which is granted, for public inspection.

2. Annual Meetings

2.1 Annual General Meeting, If the meeting is in an election year it must be held within 14 days after that election. If it is not an election year then the Annual General Meeting will take place in May.

2.2 If the outgoing Chair is available then they will preside until a new Chair has been elected. The first business of the Annual General Meeting will be the election of officers, and the completion of any necessary paper work.

2.3 Annual Meeting The Chair will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year. If there are no members of the Public present the Parish Council can agree to forgo the report and continue with the business on the Agenda.

3. Meetings

3.1 All meetings will be held in appropriate, accessible accommodation. Unless no other accommodation is available when alternative accommodation will be found subject to approval by the Chair and Vice Chair.

3.2 Meetings will be held every second Tuesday in the month except August. Dates may be changed depending on circumstances which will be agreed by Councillors at least one month in advance Clerk will email agendas and draft minutes of previous meeting to Councillors and where requested deliver a paper copy to Councillors at least three clear working days before the meeting. Clerk will also post a copy of the agenda on the notice board and the website.

3.3 Meetings will be open to the public and press but they may be temporarily excluded from the meeting if the business is regarded as confidential.

3.4 Members of the public may speak at Council meetings at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting.

3.5 The agenda for the meeting will be compiled by the Clerk, one week before the meeting the Clerk will ascertain if there are any new items Councillors wish to have included in the agenda. The agenda will always include an item to enable Councillors to declare interests. Any members of the Public attending will be asked before the meeting commences if they wish to speak on any agenda items. Only items on the agenda or matters arising from previous meeting will be discussed.

3.6 The Council may only take decisions on items clearly specified on the agenda; if agreed by the Chair, any urgent items which are not on the agenda may be discussed, but no decision may be made at that meeting.

3.7 The Chair of the Council will preside at the meeting and will be responsible for the conduct of that meeting. If the Chair is not present then the Vice Chair will preside. If neither is present then the first matter on the agenda will be the election of an appropriate Councillor who will chair the meeting. Whoever chairs the meeting will assume the duties of the Chair for the meeting.

3.8 The quorum for the Council will be one third of the total Councillor places but in any case not fewer than 3. If insufficient members present then no business will be transacted and a fresh notice will be issued to reconvene the meeting at a later date.

3.9 If at any time during the meeting it ceases to be quorate then the meeting will be adjourned and any remaining business carried forward to the meeting when next convened.

3.10 Voting at the meeting shall be by a show of hands unless a majority of Councillors wants a ballot. Only the proposer and seconder will be recorded in the minutes unless a Councillor requests that their vote is noted. A Councillor may also request that the Clerk records how each Councillor has voted, including abstentions. Any request of this nature will be made before moving on to the next business.

3.11 In cases of equal votes the Chair (or other person presiding) will have a second or casting vote.

3.12 The minutes of the meeting will be kept by the Clerk or other nominated person in the Clerk's absence. The minutes will record any decisions made by the Council. Draft minutes will be circulated to Councillors as soon as practicable, at the latest within three weeks after the meeting. Councillors will supply any suggested amendments. The minutes will then be approved at the following meeting and signed by the person presiding at that meeting.

4. Finance

4.1 Responsible Finance Office (RFO)

The Responsible Finance Officer is a statutory office and appointed by the Council. The Clerk of the Council will take on this role of managing the Council's financial affairs in accordance with Proper Practices.

4.2 Estimates and Precept

The RFO will compile estimates of income and expenditure annually for the Council's consideration. The Council will review the budget not later than the end of December in preparation for the precept being agreed and submitted to the Local Authority no later than the end of January. During the year the budget will be reviewed against actual expenditure and income. Amendments to the budget will be discussed in Council and any changes will be minuted.

4.3 Income and Expenditure

The RFO will supply regular updates of income and expenditure throughout the year and detail actual figures against estimate. Significant under spends or overspends will be brought to the attention of the Council and action taken to address any discrepancies. Underspent revenue will be identified and earmarked to reserves by a Council resolution.

4.4 Accounting and Audit

4.4.1 The RFO will determine all accounting procedures and financial records of the Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

4.4.2 The RFO will complete the annual financial statements of the Council including the annual return as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and will submit and report on them for approval by the Council. The Council will review them each year and ensure that there is an adequate, effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other procedures in line with Proper Practice.

4.4.3 An Internal Auditor will be appointed by the Council to carry out the work required to comply with the Proper Practice. The person appointed will be competent and independent of the operation of the Council.

4.4.4 The RFO will submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor by the due date, ensuring the return is complete.

4.5 Banking Arrangements and Cheques

4.5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, will be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. A resolution of the Council will nominate at least three members to be authorised by the Council to sign cheques.

4.5.2 All items of expenditure will be authorised by the Council and the payments approved. The RFO will examine invoices and verify and certify the expenditure. Cheques will be completed for all transactions and signed by two authorised Councillors.

4.5.3 Any direct debit will be approved by the full Council.

4.5.4 If the Council resolves to operate 'electronic banking' arrangements, approval will be given by the full Council.

4.6 Loans and Investments

4.6.1 Any loan or investment in the name of the Council must be scrutinised and approved by the full Council. All monies under the control of the Council will be in the name of the Council and all documents will be retained by the RFO

4.7. Contracts and Purchase Orders

4.7.1 All orders and contracts which require quotations will be approved by the full Council, and scrutinised for good value for money at all times. While the Council is not obliged to accept the lowest quotation the reasons for accepting the quotation will be recorded.

4.8 Assets

4.8.1 The RFO will ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets is maintained by the Council. It will be reviewed at least annually**,** in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets if appropriate.

4.9 VAT

4.9.1 VAT The RFO will promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with the VAT Act 1974 section 33 will be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year.

6 Insurance

6.1 Following the annual risk assessment the Council will review the level of insurance cover and ensure it is adequate and appropriate for the activities of the Council. Minimum cover will include Public Liability, Employers Liability, Money and Fidelity Guarantee.

7. Risk Assessment

7.1 A Risk Assessment assessment will be undertaken annually of all the activities of the Council and a report approved by the Council. This assessment will also cover the appropriateness of the internal audit arrangements. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually, and recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting.

7.2 A full risk assessment will be undertaken by the Chair or Vice Chair on each occasion that a request is made to the Parish Council for a public event to be held on Parish Council owned land within the village. Each request will need to complete the necessary forms.

8. Freedom of Information Act

8.1 Freedom of Information The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. The Clerk will ensure the Council conforms to the requirements of the Act allowing public access to the appropriate documents. The Council should periodically review the procedure and scheme.

9. Clerk to the Council

9.1 The Council will appoint a Clerk to the Council which will be on an employed basis, unless the Clerk is a member of the Council, acting in an unpaid capacity.

9.2 The Clerk will act as the Proper Officer of the Council, and they will receive the Declarations of Acceptance of Office and notices disclosing interests; sign documents on behalf of the Council and issue summons agendas and notices of meetings; receive and distribute plans and documents on behalf of the Council; and also advise the bank of changes to mandates.

9.3 The Clerk will act as Responsible Financial Officer

9.4 As an employee of the Council the Clerk is covered by employment legislation that deals with employment rights, discrimination in employment, unfair dismissal, redundancy and similar matters. The Clerk will therefore have a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions under which they are employed. This will effectively be administered by the Chairman or designated Councillor acting with the authority of the Council. The Council must also have a Discipline and Grievance procedure in place. The Council will have the services of a Payroll Company to undertake the calculation of the Clerks salary and ascertain payment due by the Council to HMRC for Tax and NI

10. Committees and task-and-finish groups

The Council from time to time may set up committees and task-and-finish groups to undertake work on behalf of the Council. The Council will set their Terms of Reference, and they will report periodically to the Council.

11. Alteration or Reversal of previous decisions

Decisions of the Council will not be reversed within 4 months, except where a special item is placed on the agenda bearing the name of two Councillors, and is considered and approved by the Council.

12. Standing Orders

12.1 These and any other Standing Orders/Policies will be reviewed annually by the Council, and any amendments will be decided by the Council.

12.2 During the course of meetings of the Council, the Chair's decision as to the interpretation of the Standing Orders will be final.

12.3 The Council may resolve to suspend a Standing Order in order to progress the business of the Council, and such decision will be included in the minutes. The suspension will not be taken lightly and it will be time limited.

These Standing Orders were adopted by Long Newton Parish Council at the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th March 2026

Signed ……K Hissitt……

Keith Hissitt Chair Long Newton Parish Council