



GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN FIFE

FIFE COUNCIL
GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

INDEX

<u>Section</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1.0	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS	4 – 5
1.1	Local Vision or Mission Statement	4
1.2	Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils	4
1.3	Constitution	4
1.4	Liaison with the Fife Council (the Local Authority)	4
1.5	Training for Community Councillors	5
2.0	MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS	5
3.0	OFFICE BEARER ROLES/REMIT	6 – 8
3.1	Chairperson	6 – 7
3.2	Vice-Chair	7
3.3	Secretary	7
3.4	Treasurer	7 – 8
4.0	GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)	8
4.1	Fife Council	8
4.2	Community Council	8
5.0	PROMOTING EQUALITY	8 – 9
6.0	WORKING STRATEGICALLY	9 – 10
6.1	The reactive role	9
6.2	The proactive role	9
6.3	Examining what is going on inside and outside the community	9 – 10
6.4	Reviewing the options	10
6.5	Making strategic decisions	10
6.6	Setting the objectives	10
6.7	Developing the Strategy	10
7.0	REPORT WRITING	10 – 11
7.1	Stage 1 - Planning the report	10
7.2	Stage 2 - Preparing the report	11
8.0	MEDIA AND PUBLICITY	11 – 13
8.1	Dealing with the Press	11
8.2	Handling Press interviews	12
8.3	Keeping people informed	12
8.4	Using Social Media & Creating Websites	12

<u>Section</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
8.5	Social Media Policy	12 – 13
9.0	EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION	13 – 15
9.1	Dealing with conflict	13
9.2	Conflict within Community Councils	13
9.3	Personality clashes	14
9.4	Conflict over community issues	14 – 15
10.0	FINANCE	15 – 16
10.1	Local Community Planning	15
10.2	Other funding sources	15
10.3	Bank accounts	15
10.4	Expenditure	15
10.5	Annual Accounts	16
10.6	Inventory	16
11.0	SUMMARY	16
	APPENDICES:	
1.	Good Practice Agreement	17 – 24
2.	Financial Guidelines for Community Councils	25 – 33
3.	The Data Protection Act 1998 – Guidance Note for Community Councils	34 – 36
4.	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – Top 12 Tasks for Community Councils	37 – 40
5.	Retention Guidelines for Community Councils	41 – 42
6.	Summary of Insurance Cover for Community Councils	43 – 46
7.	Guidance for Use of Social Media by Community Councils	47 – 50
8.	National Standards for Community Engagement	51 – 52
9.	Community Council Meetings Guidance	53 – 61

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS

This Guidance complements Fife Council's Governance for Community Councils, i.e., the [Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils in Fife \(2021\)](#) and provides information that Community Councillors may need in order to operate effectively within their Community Council and will be updated in response to any changing circumstances or requests from Community Councils.

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 when setting up Community Councils, stated their general purpose as:

"To ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents and to take such action in the interests of the community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable."

All Community Councils are bound by other legislation to promote equality and should have due regard of the need to:

- eliminate discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

1.1 LOCAL VISION OR MISSION STATEMENT

Community Councils may consider developing a 'Local Vision' to describe their aims, core values and long-term objectives. A 'Mission Statement' is a useful tool which can describe the Community Council's commitment to serve its community.

1.2 CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDERS

All Community Councils are required to have a Constitution - see **Section 2.6 of the Scheme**. Additionally, **Schedule 2 of the Scheme** - 'Model Standing Orders' - a set of written rules for Community Councils.

1.3 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (FIFE COUNCIL/ COMMUNITY COUNCILS)

See **Section 2 of the Scheme** – 'Rights and Responsibilities at a Glance' – for the Council's and its Community Councils' obligations, rights and responsibilities.

Appendix 1 – 'Good Practice Agreement' (attached) provides further details.

1.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Councils as elected bodies are closest to local people and can play a major role in decision-making locally. All Community Councillors are expected to engage with the community and contribute to local government decision-making.

Fife Council's website - [Community planning | Fife Council](#) – has information on 'the Plan for Fife'; Partnership Groups and their remit; Community Planning Partners and Delivery Leads.

1.5 TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

See **Section 7.5 of the Scheme** – ‘Consultation and Representations’ for information - a training programme will be responsive and needs led, and include:

- Induction/basic training for newly appointed Community Councillors following an election;
- Basic mediation and/or conflict resolution training for Community Councillors – see **Section 9.0** – ‘Effective Engagement and Consultation’ (attached);
- **Schedule 4 of the Scheme** - ‘Community Council Complaints Procedure’;
- Specific, identified training for Office Bearers, e.g., chairing meetings; keeping financial records; writing minutes and reports;
- Consultation on Planning Applications – See **Schedule 5 of the Scheme** – ‘Consultation on Planning Applications’.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

See the following Sections of the Scheme for detailed information:

- **Section 3.0** – ‘Establishment and Membership of Community Councils’:
- **Section 4.0** – ‘Community Council Elections’:
- **Section 16.0** – ‘Dissolution of a Community Council’ – a Community Council may also cease to operate where membership numbers are insufficient (the Council will make this decision).
- **Schedule 1** – ‘Membership of Community Council’.
- **Schedule 6** - ‘Election Rules’.

2.1 FILLING CASUAL VACANCIES ON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that Standing Orders and the ‘Scheme’ are adhered to, although there is some scope for Community Councils to determine their own process when filling casual vacancies.

To ensure a clear and transparent process when filling casual vacancies, advice based on the model Standing Orders, Scheme of Establishment and Best Practice is as follows:-

- New members wishing to join the cc should contact an office bearer, who must advise the Chairperson, Secretary etc. If there are vacancies on the cc membership, the person(s) interested in joining the cc, should be invited to the next cc meeting and the Secretary must place an item on the Agenda titled - CC Membership - so the current cc members are aware of any changes to membership of the cc.
- During the meeting, at the relevant agenda item, those wishing to join the cc may read out a personal statement with their reasons for wishing to join the cc (optional).
- The CC Chair must take a vote from the existing cc members to ensure there is agreement to appoint the new members.
- New members must complete a declaration of acceptance of office form which must be returned to Fife Council by email - community.councils@fife.gov.uk.
- Declaration forms can be downloaded from the Fife Council Community Council page - [Community Councils | Fife Council](#)

3.0 OFFICE BEARER ROLES/REMITTS

Community Councils will have the following 'official' roles, ie, Office Bearers:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson (optional)
- Secretary
- Minute Secretary (optional)
- Treasurer

3.1 THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson will ensure that Community Council meetings run smoothly, at times, under challenging circumstances requiring the appropriate respect and support of members and the Chairperson to have appropriate interpersonal and organisational skills.

The Chairperson will ensure that all items on an agenda are considered and action agreed, as appropriate. They will make judgments about the time given to each agenda item, occasionally bringing anyone speaking back to the agenda and encouraging contributions that are brief and to the point and inclusive of all present.

During Community Council meetings all speakers will address any comments through the Chairperson. Where proceedings do not need to be as formal, the Chairperson may simply steer the general direction of the discussion. Whichever approach the Chairperson takes will depend on the circumstances at the time.

The Chairperson is expected to have a neutral point of view. However, if the Chairperson has a personal opinion on an item on the agenda, they should hand over chairing responsibility to the Vice-Chair or other office bearer when contributing their views.

The Chairperson is responsible for running meetings effectively, meaning: starting and finishing on time; keeping participants to the agenda; timetabling and managing the meeting so all agenda items receive the appropriate attention; and summing up at the end of each item, ensuring agreed action points are clear, who will carry out the task and within agreed timescale.

The Chairperson is expected to know the rules by which the Community Council functions and that the Community Council is operating in accordance with 'the Scheme'/its Constitution and Standing Orders. The Chairperson may be asked to act as an arbiter if there is a disagreement about how the Scheme, etc, is interpreted. It is advised that these documents are at hand at meetings of the Community Council and that all members can gain access to them.

The Chairperson's role will also extend outwith meetings - to act on behalf of the Community Council or to represent the Community Council in dealing with outside bodies. This role may also be undertaken by other office bearers or members if agreed. Therefore, the Chairperson will pro-actively share 'courtesy' communication with members if they are asked to act on behalf of the Community Council.

The Chairperson will often be seen as the 'official' spokesperson for the Community Council and must be seen as authoritative and fair in all of their dealings with outside bodies, groups, individuals and the Press.

The Chairperson and other office bearers, have a lead role to play in between meetings in making sure that members, established Sub-Committees (working groups) or third parties are prepared to report on progress on particular action previously agreed by members, within the required timescale, as necessary.

The Chairperson and Secretary will work together, involving other members, as agreed, to set the agenda for each meeting based on the priorities of the Community Council; any ongoing actions that are taking place between scheduled meetings; and any other new and important emerging issues.

3.2 THE VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-chair will stand in for the Chairperson when they are absent from meetings. The Vice-chair might also be considered a preparatory role for a future Chairperson by supporting the Chairperson and taking over some of the Chairperson's workload if asked, e.g., if a Community Council has sub-committees working on specific topics.

3.3 THE SECRETARY

The Secretary will usually be responsible for:

- Arranging the venue for meetings;
- Dealing with correspondence, as agreed by the Community Council;
- Compiling the agenda for meetings (with the Chairperson);
- Distributing the agenda in advance of meetings;
- Copying and distributing minutes in advance of the next meeting;
- Taking minutes of meetings, or delegating this to a dedicated Minute Secretary if there is one;
- Liaising with the local authority and other public bodies;
- Public relations, dealing with the media (or delegating this to the Chairperson, or a dedicated media representative).

The Secretary (as all office bearers) must be prepared to put in the necessary time and effort in their role, although, aspects of the Secretary's role may be delegated to other members as required.

The Secretary will have the necessary skills and capacity to fulfill their role - knowledge of ICT; word-processing skills; and familiar with the use of Internet, email and social media (**see Appendix 7 – 'Using Social Media & Creating Websites'**).

3.4 THE TREASURER

The Treasurer is responsible for banking matters relating to receipt of the annual Administration Allowance; Discretionary Grant Funding; third party funding and donations; and issuing cheques and making payments on behalf of the Community Council.

The Treasurer will manage the bank account and account for all funds received and ensure money is only spent in accordance with the Community Council's objectives and with approval of the Community Council.

The Treasurer will maintain the Community Council's financial records so that they can disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Community Council.

See **Section 8.0 of the Scheme – ‘Finance and Accounts’** and **Appendix 2 – ‘Financial Guidelines for Community Councils’** (attached).

4.0 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION – GDPR

For information, see the following:

- **Section 15.0 of the Scheme – ‘Data Protection’**
- **‘Additional Information Resources’** contained within **the Scheme**
- **Appendix 3** - ‘the Data Protection Act 1998: Guidance Note for Community Councils’ (attached)
- **Appendix 4** – ‘GDPR – ‘Top 10 Tasks for Community Councils’ (attached)
- **Appendix 5** – ‘Retention Schedule’ of this Booklet (attached)

4.1 FIFE COUNCIL

Fife Council will:

- provide information on what the Council does with the information detailed on formal Community Council Nomination Forms during elections;
- electronically and securely hold information on Community Councillors as necessary under the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 supporting the establishment of Community Councils;
- make public information on Fife Council’s website by consent, e.g., the Community Council Public Contact List and meeting Schedule - as agreed by the Community Council/Councillor;
- require candidates at elections to advise their Proposer and Secunder how their information will be processed and retained by Fife Council to carry out its statutory functions; and
- a privacy statement will be provided alongside the formal Community Council Nomination Form for any prospective Community Council candidates.

4.2 COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Similar to the above, Community Councils must also adhere to the GDPR when handling personal data related to the activities of the Community Council, e.g., when dealing with public enquiries or complaints.

5.0 PROMOTING EQUALITY

Community Councils are responsible for ensuring their members comply with equal opportunities legislation. UK laws cover discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religion, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins and disability. It is important that all sections of the community are properly represented and have the opportunity to participate in the local democratic process.

It is important that Community Councillors recognise that they are required to play a role in their Community Council, not simply to offer their own views and opinions on local issues or to take decisions that are based only on their own self-interest but inclusive of the entire community.

The community should be encouraged to bring issues to the Community Council's attention for consideration at Community Council meetings as necessary, having checked the facts beforehand. There are often two sides to a 'story' and both views should be represented to avoid misunderstandings or misrepresentations of the facts.

The views of the community should take precedence over the interests of the Community Council where there is conflict between individual views and that of the Community Council, to promote confidence in the Community Council and its work.

An effective Community Council will identify the needs and aspirations of its community and take decisions that will lead to appropriate action in that community taking account of competing or conflicting needs of the community.

5.1 IMPROVING AND ENCOURAGING YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

Lack of youth involvement in Community Councils was addressed in the Scottish Government's National Model Scheme where the minimum age for full members with full voting rights is 16 years of age. Community Councils may also provide associate memberships for persons below 16 years of age if there is local demand for this – see the Scottish Government Good Practice Guidance for Community Councils for details - [Good Practice Guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

6.0 WORKING STRATEGICALLY

6.1 THE REACTIVE ROLE

The Community Council may think that their primary responsibility is to react efficiently to issues and matters brought to them by members of their community; and to correspondence received from public bodies, e.g., the Council.

A view that could be taken by the Community Council is, if a problem is brought before the Community Council, then something will then be done about it. In which case, the agenda would be loaded with issues such as street lighting needing repair, grass that needs cut, etc. Clearly these are issues of importance to the community, and therefore matters which need to be resolved.

Working in this way is **reactive** in that individuals and organisations outside the Community Council set the Community Council's agenda.

6.2 THE PROACTIVE ROLE

The Community Council may see it as their job, in addition to reacting to issues such as those mentioned above, set out to identify the various issues that it thinks might affect the community, both in the short and longer term. The Community Council would then set out priorities and objectives to address those issues and consider what actions the Community Council might play in making things happen – being **proactive**.

6.3 EXAMINING WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY

The Community Council will look at the ways in which their community and local environment might be improved, examine the needs that are apparent in the community, gather the evidence which supports the needs, and try to identify any related hopes and ambitions based upon these needs that could be realised.

The Community Council will then look at what is going on in the outside world - what are the major opportunities or threats; what is the likely impact of availability of relevant funding; how the Community Council can take advantage of any opportunities available or take action to minimise the impact of any threats.

6.4 REVIEWING THE OPTIONS

The Community Council may then set out all of the possibilities and opportunities they might get involved in to benefit the community. These are strategic options and they need to be carefully considered before deciding which to pursue. The Community Council will need to be realistic about how much time, effort and resources would have to be put in to the various options, establishing whether or not those are justified for the outcome to be achieved.

6.5 MAKING STRATEGIC DECISIONS

Once satisfied that all of the options open to the Community Council have been examined, it is possible to start taking decisions about which options offer most benefit or make most sense given the circumstances- choosing a direction for the Community Council to pursue, a shared vision.

Once the overall direction has been chosen, consult widely within the community. Find out whether people in general are supportive and identify any particular concerns that they might have. By consulting early there is a greater likelihood that the community as a whole will be supportive of any action that the Community Council subsequently takes. It also helps to limit the risk that the Community Council moves in a direction that alienates the wider community.

6.6 SETTING THE OBJECTIVES

Once an overall vision is clear, it is easier to set an aim and specific objectives.

6.7 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

When objectives are clearly set out, consider what needs to be done to achieve them. Think about which actions are likely to be the most effective. A Strategy setting down the steps to be taken to meet the objectives can help to achieve the desired outcome.

7.0 REPORT WRITING

If there is a particular issue about which a Community Councillor feels strongly, they may want to write up a short report so that their fellow Community Councillors can make themselves familiar with it. Some people find the thought of writing a report quite daunting. However, writing a report can be very simple if approached in the right way - suggested stages of report writing are set out below:

7.1 STAGE 1 - PLANNING THE REPORT

What is the aim/what is to be achieved by writing a report - is its purpose to inform fellow Community Councillors about something or is the report trying to influence them to take a particular decision on an issue?

Next, decide what information needs to be included to achieve the objective - include no more information than is absolutely necessary.

7.2 STAGE 2 - PREPARING THE REPORT

Having decided what to include in the report, gather information. This might involve taking statements from people, or doing some research of records. Try to make sure that the information is accurate and unbiased. Remember the following points:

- Avoid too many statistics, they can be hard to follow – put them in an Appendix);
- Keep sentences short and to the point and in plain language;
- Start with an introduction that explains in a nutshell what the report is about;
- Go on to develop the ideas in the main body of the report then do a short summary;
- Finish off with a conclusion setting out any recommendations for consideration.

8.0 MEDIA & PUBLICITY

8.1 DEALING WITH THE PRESS

It may occasionally be necessary to issue a formal press release stating the Community Council's views or clarifying facts, particularly when a controversial issue divides the community or when, in the opinion of the Community Council, their discussions have been incompletely reported or misrepresented in the media.

As a Community Councillor, you may be directly approached by the Press looking for a story. Or, for whatever reason, you decide that you want to take information to the Press. In either case it is important to recognise how the Press operates so that you can gain maximum benefit and avoid some of the common pitfalls.

The Press has two major priorities:

- to get 'copy' - material to fill up newspaper columns;
- to get good 'stories' - articles that have a human-interest value and which sell newspapers.

When dealing with the Press it is likely that they will make a quick assessment as to which category the information presented falls into and this assessment may determine what actually happens to the information given. By giving information with a 'human interest' dimension, it may be possible to get fuller coverage than would otherwise be possible.

For example, instead of simply giving details of a public event to a local paper for publicity, write a short article on the person organising the event and the particular problems encountered along the way. This may result in a lengthier article appearing with a photograph alongside.

Another way to interest the Press is to issue a formal 'Press Release', which at its most effective is probably a half to three-quarters page of A4. It can be issued to both local and regional newspapers and on occasion may interest national papers, possibly local radio and television stations.

Keep in mind, however, that journalists can edit news items. They might put an emphasis on particular words or events resulting in the message getting distorted. Try to ensure that words are chosen carefully; that anything said could end up as a headline.

Local newspapers have tight deadlines to meet so make sure that copy is submitted in plenty of time. They also appreciate information and articles that can be printed without a lot of cutting and reorganising so try to make sure that the information provided is to the point.

8.2 HANDLING PRESS INTERVIEWS

If being interviewed by a journalist it is necessary to be particularly careful about what is said. It is easy to be caught off guard and to say something that is not really meant. Be very wary about off the record comments because these may end up being attributed to the Community Councillor.

Think about what to say before the interview starts. Take a few minutes to prepare. Try to be clear about what sort of message to convey, making sure it does not get lost during the interview. If unclear, ask the journalist to call back later and do some research, e.g., by checking with the Chairperson or Secretary before commenting.

Be aware that spreading inaccurate information or indulging in abusive criticism of other parties, can not only devalue what may have been a reasonable case, but could also result in legal action for defamation.

8.3 KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED

Remember, a regular information source about the work of the Community Council is what communities read in the Press. For this reason, it is a good idea that Community Councils make every effort to pass good quality information to the local Press. The more informed the community are about local issues, the greater the likelihood that they will want to get involved.

8.4 USING SOCIAL MEDIA & CREATING WEBSITES

See **Appendix 7** – ‘Guidance for Community Councils, Use of Social Media by Community Councils’ (attached).

Social media is a part of our culture and it is important to take advantage of these mediums which includes the following.

- Facebook Pages
- Gmail email service
- Twitter social networking service
- WordPress to create websites

NB: Digital Fife and Fife Voluntary Action provide advice to Community Organisations and can assist with establishing websites.

8.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube and blogging represent a growing form of communication, allowing engagement with your community and the public more easily than ever before. However, it is also an area in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested. Putting a policy in place for the appropriate use of social media to increase engagement, can also protect the Community Council’s reputation.

The Community Council may wish to nominate a Communications Officer to co-ordinate and manage social media content on their behalf to oversee social media. Passwords and access should be shared amongst at least 3 members of the Community Council – but remain accessible by all members should this be required.

The reputation of the Community Council is first and foremost, and this involves maintaining a safe and friendly environment for its members. Social media forums can be hijacked by trolls or spammers, or attract people who attack other contributors or the organisation aggressively. In order to maintain a pleasant environment for everybody, posts need to be moderated and/or removed if necessary.

Any complaints made against the Community Council relating to their use of social media should be dealt with following the complaints process outlined in **Schedule 4** of the Scheme – ‘Community Council Complaints Procedure’.

9.0 EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

See the following Sections of the Scheme:

- **Section 2.0 of the Scheme** – ‘Rights and Responsibilities at a Glance’
- **Schedule 3 of the Scheme** – ‘Code of Conduct for Community Councillors’.

9.1 DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Working in a Community Council may not, at first sight, appear to have much to do with ‘politics’; indeed, all Community Councils are required to act as non-political bodies at all times. However, it has to be recognised that the work of Community Councils does at times concern the exercise of power, albeit at a very local level. For example, there is the power to:

- get things done in the community;
- take issue with other tiers of government;
- advise on allocating resources within the community.

Wherever power is exercised there is the possibility of conflict developing. This may be because individuals and organisations find themselves competing for access to the same resources in the community or it may simply be that individuals or organisations wish to demonstrate their ability to wield power and influence in the community. Whatever the reason, conflict can arise from time to time even in the most peaceful of communities. When it does it is important to know how to deal with it effectively so that major rifts do not develop.

As community harmony is so important, Community Councils need to ensure that, as far as possible, they exercise their power in a fair and reasonable manner. They should also try to ensure that they work in a tactful and diplomatic manner, liaising and consulting with individuals and other organisations in the community wherever possible.

9.2 CONFLICT WITHIN COMMUNITY COUNCILS

It is also recognised that conflict can break out within Community Councils. It may be that conflicts are brought into the Community Council from outside, or it may be that conflict breaks out because of a particular issue that is on the agenda. In either case it is useful to think about dealing with such conflict before finding oneself in the situation, giving a chance to work out a strategy before getting caught up in the emotion of the event.

9.3 PERSONALITY CLASHES

Conflict relating to clashes of personality can be particularly difficult to deal with because the actual issue over which the clash takes place may simply provide an opportunity for the parties to demonstrate their strongly opposing views. Where this is the case, they may be less concerned with reaching agreement or getting through the Community Council's agenda than with addressing their own personal agenda.

Such personality clashes can make other Community Councillors feel uncomfortable, and can prove damaging in the long term to the work of the Community Council. In this situation, it is not usually possible to change a person's personality. What can be changed, however, is their behaviour, that is, what they actually do.

If there are certain things which someone is doing that cause conflict in the group, e.g., rudely interrupting other people, or monopolising the discussion, it may be possible to find a way of persuading that person to change their behaviour. This can sometimes be achieved by the use of appropriate pointers, aimed at making the person aware of the behaviour that other people find offensive. At other times it may be necessary to try to persuade the Chairperson to intervene more forcefully to prevent such behaviour leading to conflict.

It is generally a good idea for Community Councillors to talk about how they feel about 'difficult' behaviour, otherwise there is a danger that communication will break down and conflict may eventually emerge in an even more damaging form e.g. Community Councillors resigning and/or leading to an established Community Council becoming entirely undermined.

9.4 CONFLICT OVER COMMUNITY ISSUES

Another form of conflict in meetings relates to the particular community issues on the agenda, rather than to more general clashes of personality. From time to time issues will arise that some Community Councillors feel particularly strongly about. This may be because of their personal beliefs or values, or it may be because they are representing the strong views that are held in sections of the community.

If you do find yourself in this sort of conflict it is important to show that, even if you don't see things in the same way as others, you do recognise that they feel strongly about the issue, and you understand what their concern is.

Explain your feelings on the matter, being firm but friendly, trying wherever possible to find concerns that you share with them. Then move on to the areas where you differ and try to use their ideas as a base on which to build a solution that is acceptable to all concerned e.g. *"I understand your concern about X and think that it's something that we ought to do something about. However, I would want to approach the problem from a different angle because I think that Y is important too. Why don't we do Z, which will meet your concerns about X and my concerns about Y?"*

In this way it is possible to demonstrate to other people that you are able to listen to other people's ideas as well as presenting your own. By demonstrating your ability to listen you will also increase the likelihood that other people will listen to you.

In all types of conflict, a Community Councillor arriving at the meeting 'fired up' about a particular issue is unlikely to act constructively or agree compromise. An experienced Chairperson will, as early as possible, allow both sides ample time to state their case and then try to broker a compromise.

Planning issues can often arouse considerable ill-feeling and/or conflict and are potentially divisive. It is important that all sides are given the opportunity to make their views known and the role of the Chairperson can be crucial in managing a difficult situation. Depending on the circumstances, it may be useful to hear representations from prospective developers and from those that are either supporting or objecting to development proposals. It is important that equal opportunity is given to all sides in these circumstances in relation to speaking time; number of questions asked, etc.

10.0 FINANCE

See the following for information:

- **Section 8.0 of the Scheme** – ‘Finance and Accounts’
- **Appendix 2** – ‘Financial Guidelines for Community Councils’ (attached)

10.1 FIFE COUNCIL GRANTS

The Community Council is eligible to apply for appropriate Fife Council grants for qualifying projects.

10.2 OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Community Councils may generate income from sources other than the Council. This income may also be applied towards expenditure not covered by funding awards made by the Council.

10.3 BANK ACCOUNTS

The Community Council will require to open a bank account, authorising at least 3 of its members as signatories. **See section 8.9 of the Scheme of Establishment**

The Treasurer is responsible for reconciling and maintaining records of any banking.

10.4 EXPENDITURE

The treasurer will be responsible for all expenditure approved by the Community Council, keeping proper accounts of the Community Council’s finances.

Petty cash vouchers will be signed by the person requesting cash and countersigned by the Treasurer and one other authorised signatory and will retain all receipts for items of expenditure paid by cash.

Travel expenses may be reimbursed if accompanied by an appropriate receipt and if incurred by a member on official Community Council business. A detailed record of dates, times, destination, reason for travel and mode of transport will require to be provided. Where travel is by car, proof of average miles per gallon could be used to calculate an appropriate rate of claim for mileage covered. All claimants should sign and date any claims for travel allowance and submit this to the Treasurer.

Reimbursement of expenses for telephone calls made relating to Community Council business, can be made at the discretion of the Community Council, in which case, an itemised telephone statement highlighting the calls made will be required to be submitted and any reimbursement authorised by the Community Council.

10.5 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

An annual statement of accounts must be prepared at the end of the financial year, i.e., from 1 April until 31 March in the following year, for audit and the audited accounts passed to Fife Council by 31 December as part of the Community Council's grant application.

10.6 INVENTORY

The Community Council must maintain an inventory detailing all the assets of the Community Council. The inventory should be updated on an ongoing basis.

11.0 SUMMARY

The main purpose of a Community Council is to represent the views of their community. Given the current broad legislative remit of Community Councils, the scope for their potential future development remains substantial.

GOOD PRACTICE AGREEMENT

(Updated – October 2020)

Section 1

Introduction

Fife Council is committed to supporting and developing Community Councils. The Council values the role of Community Councils in communicating and consulting with local communities and as a means of involving local people in the process of local government and making representations to those who provide services to their Communities.

Fife's Community Plan - Plan for Fife – brings together public service providers and the wider community in Fife and sets out 4 Priority Themes: opportunities for all; thriving places; inclusive growth and jobs; and community led services. See Plan for Fife on the Fife Council website - [Plan for Fife | Fife Council](#).

Community Councils are important participants in the process of delivering these goals, to achieving the vision and in doing so improving the quality of life for their communities.

This Agreement outlines the practical support and standards that Community Councils can expect from Fife Council and also details the expectations of the contribution that Community Councils as effective representative organisations can make within the Community Planning agenda.

There is provision for over 100 Community Councils covering all parts of Fife, all as diverse and individual as the communities they serve. Some will find parts of the agreement more relevant than others, it is not intended as a rule book but to offer a benchmark for best practice.

The Good Practice Agreement relies on the goodwill and commitment of Fife Council and Community Councils to work together. Fife Council, having regard to changing circumstances and representations made to it, shall from time to time review this Agreement, and where it considers it ought to be amended, shall proceed with the full involvement of Community Councils.

Section 2

Fife Council's Commitment to Community Councils

Consultation and Participation

General

Community Councils make a valuable contribution by representing the views and interests of local communities and expressing those to Fife Council. Fife Council has a statutory obligation to consult Community Councils on planning applications and alcohol licences - a separate section below deals with planning applications.

The Council is committed to consulting with Community Councils on a range of other issues, for example:-

- ◆ *changes in licensing policies;*
- ◆ *major works or major utility works of which the Council is aware;*
- ◆ *policy developments likely to have an effect on the people that Community Councils represent;*
- ◆ *Community Council issues e.g. review of Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils, Election Rules and the Complaints Procedure.*

Community Councils can be involved in consultation and participation at a local level in conjunction with local forums, etc.

Community Councils will be invited to participate in the Council's decision-making processes in a variety of ways; questionnaires, public meetings, joint working groups, Local Forums etc. as appropriate. Timescales will, as far as possible, be reasonable to allow Community Councils to participate and respond fully – a minimum of six weeks' notice will be given wherever possible. There may be occasions where Community Councils are asked to respond at short notice e.g. planning applications.

A Consultation Diary will be available on the Fife Council website giving information on Council consultation exercises including the issues to be consulted on, the dates of the exercises, methods to be used and relevant contact numbers. The Consultation Diary can be viewed via this link - [Consultation Diary | Fife Council](#).

Wherever possible, a minimum of six weeks' notice of meetings and events will be given to enable Community Councils to arrange for a representative to participate. If possible, greater notice will be given, and less notice given only if unavoidable.

Community Councils will be informed in writing of the outcome of consultation exercises they have been involved in, for example planning applications, Common Good Fund applications, consultations on reviews etc.

The Council will offer support and training to enable Community Councils to carry out their role as representatives of their Community e.g. Planning process etc.

The Council will organise and conduct elections to Community Councils.

Planning Applications

See Schedule 5 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Fife

- All Community Councils will be emailed a weekly list of all planning applications for the appropriate area. Community Councils can request formal consultation on an individual application within 7 working days of the issuing date of the weekly list.
- A minimum 14-day consultation period will be initiated, beginning on the date of issue of the application details. Copies of the relevant plans and forms will be sent direct to the Community Council

- The case officer is identified on the weekly list to assist the Community Council, e.g. for further discussion or information. Informal consultation with Fife Council Officers may also take place if considered necessary by the Economy, Planning and Employability Service.
- Community Councils are also informed whether the planning application will be considered by the Area Planning Committee or whether it is an application which can be determined under delegated powers to officials.
- Fife Council will advise Community Councils of the outcome of Planning applications on which they have made representations.

In dealing with planning applications Community Councils should have regard to Planning Advice Note 47 issued by the Scottish Government – see link [Planning Advice Note 47](#).

Information and Resources

Information

The agendas, reports and minutes of all Council Committees will be made available for inspection on the Fife Council website www.fife.gov.uk

A list of the dates of Council Committee meetings is available on Fife Council's website.

The Guidance for Community Councils, a collection of key documents such as the Scheme of Establishment, this Agreement and other relevant advice is available on the main Community Council page of Fife Council's website via this link - [Community Councils | Fife Council](#).

Resources

Local Customer Services Centres can provide advice and information to Community Councils on the range of equipment and resources that can be accessed locally, including:

- photocopying facilities
- computing/IT facilities (and training as appropriate)
- meeting spaces
- use of telephone

Funding

The Council will agree the level of funding for Community Councils annually as per the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

- A form will be issued to Community Councils at the start of each financial year detailing what information is required for payment of the annual grant.
- Funding up to a maximum award will be issued on receipt of a completed form with the appropriate information (including the previous year's audited accounts, bank statement and meeting schedule).
- If the previous year's audited accounts show a credit balance of more than 20% of the total amount of grant received for that period or the cumulative balance being carried forward exceeds 3 times the annual grant then the Council will require an explanation of how this money will be used.

Community Councils can access additional funds for special projects through the Community Grants Scheme. Information on this is available at Local Offices and other Council facilities such as Community Centres and on Fife Council's website.

Insurance

The Council will arrange and fund a block insurance policy on behalf of Community Councils which will provide a base cover of insurance and will be reviewed regularly.

- Community Councils will be responsible for the excesses attached to the policy.
- A summary of the policy is available from Finance and Corporate Services Risk Management Section (email: risk.management@fife.gov.uk), a copy of the policy is also available on the Community Council page on the Fife Council website.
- The Risk Management Section will provide advice on arranging all risk cover for specified items and valuable items of equipment owned by Community Councils.
- Additional public liability insurance cover for summer fetes etc. can be arranged as required and any additional costs for this cover will be passed on to the Community Council. Community Councils should contact the Risk Management Section to arrange this cover, providing details of the event and how many people are expected to attend.

Communication and Responding to Community Councils

The Council will endeavour to meet reasonable requests for officer attendance at Community Council Meetings when given at least 7 days in advance.

Enquiries received from Community Councils will be referred to the most appropriate Service or officer.

Written enquiries will normally be answered within 10 working days. If your enquiry cannot be answered within 10 working days because it is complex and needs more time, we will tell you how long it will take us to reply and who is dealing with this.

Correspondence with Community Councils may be copied to the appropriate Elected Member(s) for information, if relevant.

Community Councils can use the Council's website (web chat) or social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube) to contact the Council – information is available at all public contact points including local Customer Services Centres and is also available online at www.fife.gov.uk

Role of Fife Council Members

All Fife Councillors are ex officio members of any Community Council within their wards (Section 4 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Fife).

Councillors' role at meetings is to act as a liaison between the Community Council and Fife Council. This will entail explaining the Council's position to Community Councils and also representing the views of the Community Council to Fife Council.

Attendance at Community Council Meetings

The Scheme requires that this document provides a protocol for the attendance of Fife Councillors at their Community Council meetings. Given that members of the Council may be ex officio members of more than one Community Council and are also invited to meetings of other local organisations such as management committees and may require to attend other meetings associated with the membership of Fife Council, it is impractical for every Councillor to attend every meeting of every Community Council.

Community Councils should discuss with their local Councillors a mutually agreed pattern of involvement with the Community Council.

Standards

In carrying out their duties, Councillors are required to comply with a Code of Conduct which sets the standards of conduct that must be applied.

Of particular interest to Community Councils is the contribution a Councillor can make in respect of individual applications such as those relating to planning or licensing. Councillors who are on Committees dealing with such matters can discuss issues or concerns, attend public meetings and make known what representations they have received but must **not** express a "for" or "against" view if they wish to participate in discussion and voting at Committee on a particular application.

Section 3

Community Councils' commitment to carrying out their roles

Representing the Community

Community Councils have a duty under statute to represent the views of their community to Fife Council and other public bodies. It is important that they reflect the broad spectrum of opinion and interests of all sections of their community. In ascertaining the views, Community Councils should ensure that there is wide consultation with the Community and encourage local interest and participation in community debate. Any response should incorporate a summary of the views expressed together with a recommendation reflecting the balance of community interest.

In order to fulfil their potential as effective, representative local organisations, Community Councils are expected to:

- Encourage local interest and participation in Community Council elections through the effective use of publicity and local community networks, etc.
- Recognise that the Community Council itself cannot always reflect the views of all sections of the community and therefore should form links with other local organisations e.g. youth groups, tenants' associations, etc to gather their views and opinions and to inform them of the work of the Community Council.
- Look at ways of finding out what the community thinks by carrying out surveys, holding public meetings and exhibitions, incorporating Open Public Forums into meetings, etc and be able to demonstrate, as far as is possible, that the views they express are representative of the communities they serve.
- Inform the community of the work and decisions of the Community Council by issuing newsletters and posting agendas and minutes of meetings in public places, on notice boards, social media and the Community Council's website if they have one..
- Consider establishing committees to deal with specific pieces of work, e.g. producing a newsletter. Although the majority of the membership of a committee should be elected members of the Community Council, there is scope for seeking representation from other people. There is no age restriction on the membership of committees, so young people for example could be actively encouraged to become involved.
- Make special arrangements to participate in any statutory consultation exercise e.g. planning applications, which require a quick response.
- Encourage the public to use their Community Council as a vehicle of communication with the Council and other statutory bodies.
- Establish proper arrangements to deal with consideration of Planning applications. These will likely include :-
 - nominating a Planning contact who is the official correspondent for planning matters for the Community Council.
 - establishing a mechanism to ensure that responses to consultations on Planning applications are submitted timeously.
 - considering Planning applications at a formal meeting of either the Community Council or a Committee.
 - arrangements for reporting back to the Community Council on any decisions taken by a Committee.

When considering planning applications, Community Councils should always bear in mind their **obligation to represent the views of their Community**, including where there may be different opinions held.

Effective Organisation

The Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils provides a legal framework for the operation of Community Councils.

In terms of the Scheme, Community Councils are required to:-

- Hold at least a minimum of four meetings a year, one of which meeting will be an Annual General meeting and publicise them well in advance to promote local awareness and encourage attendance at the meetings.
- Ensure meetings are open to the public and encourage open debate and discussion.
- Ensure meetings are held wherever possible in premises that are accessible to all members of the community.
- Maintain proper financial records and give regular financial reports at meetings.
- Submit annual audited accounts at the Annual General Meeting. These can also be displayed locally, included in a newsletter or posted on the Community Council's or Fife Council's website.
- Have regard to material conflicts of interest and ensure that their membership are aware of the need for **declarations of interest at appropriate times**.

In addition, in order to make best use of resources and funds, Community Councils are expected to: -

- Make particular efforts to encourage young people to attend and participate in meetings. Note that the Scheme allows for nominated representation from local youth organisations. There is no age restriction for these nominated members.

Funding

Community Councils may award a portion of their grant to local community groups and projects which further the aims and objectives of the Community Council.

Information

- Use Fife Council's website www.fife.gov.uk to display contact details for the Secretary and Chairperson of the Community Council, including the frequency, venue and time of meetings.
- Keep local Councillors advised of major issues.
- Utilise technology (eg email, social media, websites) to maintain the Community Council's local profile.

Training

- Take advantage of appropriate training opportunities offered by Fife Council and other relevant bodies.
- Liaise with other Community Councils and local organisations to establish and share good practice and exchange information.

Insurance

- Ensure adequate risk insurance cover is in place for items of value owned by the Community Council.
- Take advice from Fife Council Finance and Corporate Services Risk Management Section on Public Liability insurance responsibilities and arrangements when organising summer fetes or other events.

Standards

The Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils provides a legal framework in relation to the standards expected of Community Councils and individual Community Councillors.

All Community Councils should ensure that each of their members has signed the necessary Declaration of Acceptance and is aware of the terms of **Schedule 3 –Code of Conduct for Community Councillors - to the Scheme.**

Community Councils and individual Community Councillors are expected to maintain high standards of conduct in line with Schedule 3 to the Scheme at all times. Fife Council will provide written advice on Declarations of Interest as part of the Community Councils' Information Pack.

Communicating with Fife Council

In all contact with Fife Council, offer the name, address and, where possible, a daytime telephone number and email address of the Community Council's contact person and agree a timescale for responding to any request for information, etc.

The Community Council Liaison Officer, Democratic Services, Fife Council should always be advised (by email to community.councils@fife.gov.uk) of the names and addresses and where possible, telephone numbers and email addresses of the members and office bearers of your Community Council and of any changes to these.



APPENDIX 2

**FINANCIAL GUIDELINES
FOR
COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to give Community Councils some advice on book keeping good practice and preparation of accounts.

It is not intended that these guidelines are prescriptive but should be used to highlight areas of good practice and recommended procedures.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with The Good Practice Agreement between Fife Council and Fife Community Councils as well as the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Fife.

2. Funding and Bank Accounts

Each Community Council is entitled to claim an annual grant from Fife Council. The grant is calculated using a formula.

In order to claim the annual grant Community Councils will be issued with a claim form (an example is attached as Appendix 1). This form should be completed and returned with the appropriate supporting information to Finance and Corporate Services by the end of December in the financial year to which the grant relates. The supporting information includes a set of examined accounts for the previous year.

Community Councils are entitled to use the annual grant to fund administration and running costs. They may also award grants to Local Community Groups whose purposes reflect those of the Community Council, when surplus funds are available.

It should also be recognised that the Community Council grant is not the only source of funding available to Community Councils. You can also apply for funding from some of Fife Council's Community Grants Schemes, which includes grants for Environmental projects and Floral Enhancement amongst others, or from the Local Community Planning Budget for assistance with specific projects. Further advice on this can be sought from the relevant Council Service or the Community Grants Scheme Booklet.

Each Community Council should open a bank account in the name of the Community Council. It is recommended that for the most up to date information and advice on the opening of bank accounts, Community Councils should contact the local branch of the bank. They will be able to provide advice on the procedures for organisations opening and operating bank accounts. They will also be able to recommend the best type of account for the Community Council.

Good Practice Points

Open an interest-bearing current account

Community Councils should identify 3 individuals who can be authorised signatories (one of whom is the Treasurer)

Two signatories to be required for each cheque

The signatories **must not** sign blank cheques. The cheques should be prepared and presented to the authorised signatory with evidence of what the payment is for.

3. Receipts and Payments

The secret of good bookkeeping is to record all transactions as quickly as possible and to maintain adequate records.

All income and expenditure transactions should be recorded; the simplest format being a cash book layout, an example is detailed in Appendix 2.

All payments made must be supported by a source document, for example, a till receipt or an invoice. These documents should be numbered and filed in order. The document number should be recorded on the cash book for reference.

Where a till receipt or invoice is not available, the Treasurer should issue a receipt, detailing what the payment was for and signed by the person receiving the payment – this would become the source document and evidence that a payment was made.

As with payments, all receipts should also have a source document, for example, the Fife Council Grant will have a remittance advice, again these documents should be numbered and filed. The number should be recorded on the cashbook.

Good Practice Points

Record all transactions quickly.

Use cashbook layout to record all transactions

Number and file all source documents

4. Annual Accounts

The Annual Accounts period must be for the financial year 01 April 20XX to 31 March 20XY. An example of the recommended layout is shown as Appendix 3.

The Annual Accounts contain the Income & Expenditure Account and the Statement of Funds. They should summarise the Income and Expenditure for the year on the left and for comparison purposes show the previous year on the right-hand side. The annual accounts should be prepared from the detailed cash book which has been used to record all transactions, for example the cash book at Appendix 2 shows 4 expenditure items for Floral Decorations, these are added together and grouped as “Floral” on the Income and Expenditure statement.

It would be helpful for the reader of the accounts if a breakdown of larger items of expenditure could be provided as a note. For example, Appendix 3 shows expenditure on grants and donations, this could be expanded as a note to the accounts to show how that figure was arrived at.

The Annual Accounts must also show the Statement of Funds. This details the funds held by the Community Council at the start of the financial year, the surplus or deficit for the year, then the balance of funds held at the end of the financial year. As above for comparison purposes the previous year should also be shown. This figure should agree with and be supported by the Bank Statements.

In order to claim annual grant from Fife Council, an independent examiner must examine the Annual Accounts. The key issues to be considered when appointing an independent examiner are:

- Independence (someone who is not on the Community Council)
- Ability and Experience

Those who can act as an Independent Examiner can include:

- Accountants (including retired)
- People with accountancy/financial experience
- Experienced Treasurers i.e. those who act as Treasurers with other organisations e.g. Charities
- The examiner must be a person not a firm or organisation.

The independent examiner must confirm that the bank and cash balances agree with the relevant bank statements. They must also examine all documents they deem necessary to check and verify the annual accounts.

The accounts must be signed and dated with the following statement:

“I certify that I have examined the accounts of “*Anywhere Community Council*”. To the best of my knowledge and belief, and in accordance with the information and explanations given to me, the Accounts have been properly prepared from the records of the Community Council and are in agreement with these records”.

The name, address and contact details of the independent examiner should also be detailed on the Annual accounts.

When Community Councils are making the claim for the annual grant, examined accounts must be submitted. In addition, a list of meetings for the financial year, along with a copy of the relevant bank statements must be submitted to allow confirmation of the closing balances held.

Some Community Councils have additional funds for specific events such as Christmas lights or environmental funds. Any income and expenditure statements in relation to these events should be submitted along with the examined annual accounts.

It is considered good practice to prepare monthly reports for consideration at the meetings of the Community Council. These would be in a similar format to the annual accounts and would show a summary of transactions for the month.

Good Practice Points

Monthly reports can also be prepared.

Prepare the Income and Expenditure statement using detailed cash book

The accounts should be prepared for the year 01 April to 31 March

Consider providing additional information as a note to the accounts

Independent Examiner must examine the accounts

5. Contact Details

Should you require advice on financial record keeping and compiling accounts please contact:

Financial Services
Finance and Corporate Services
Fife House
North Street
Glenrothes
KY7 5LT

Email: Financial.services@fife.gov.uk

COMMUNITY COUNCIL GRANTS FORM 2020 / 2021

«COMMUNITY_COUNCIL» Community Council

SUPPLIER REF:

PAYEE DETAILS:

.....
 Post Code:

BANK DETAILS – PLEASE INDICATE IF THIS IS A NEW BANK ACCOUNT YES/NO

Name of Account
 Sort Code Account Number
 Name and Address of Bank
Post Code

INFORMATION REQUIRED

- List of Community Council meetings dates for the financial year 2019/20
 - Set of examined accounts for 2019/20
 - Bank Statement dated 31/03/2020.
- Please tick
- | |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
- Was your Community Council’s total expenditure less than 80% of the annual grant you received last year from Fife Council? **YES/NO**

If, ‘Yes’ please explain the intended use for the surplus (e.g. local project, etc).

.....

- I wish to claim the grant of £«Total1» for «COMMUNITY_COUNCIL» Community Council for 2020/21

OR

- I wish to claim the grant of £«Total2» including reimbursement of the data protection notification fee of £40.

Data Protection Registration Number:

Signature:

Position within Community Council:

Date:

Please note that grant applications for the 2020/2021 financial year must be made no later than 31st December 202X - application forms submitted retrospectively will not be progressed.

Please return form and associated documents by email where possible to – community.councils@fife.gov.uk Forms can still be posted to:- Community Council Grant Application, Committee Services Team, Legal and Democratic Services, 2nd Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 5LT, where email is not possible.

Please Note that due to current restrictions relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic, there may be delays in processing any applications returned by post, due to limited staff resources working from Fife Council offices.

Anywhere Community Council							
Cash Book							
Year Ended 31 March 20XX							
Income				Expenditure			
Date	Doc Ref	Narrative	Amount	Doc Ref	Date	Narrative	Amount
01/04/XX		Opening Balance	150.00	1	XX/XX/XX	Floral Decoration	30.00
XX/XX/XX	1	Community Council Grant	250.00	2	XX/XX/XX	Rainbow Club Grant	100.00
XX/XX/XX	2	Grant	100.00	3	XX/XX/XX	Newsletter	15.00
XX/XX/XX	3	Newsletter	35.00	4	XX/XX/XX	Travel	10.00
XX/XX/XX	4	Bus Hire	30.00	5	XX/XX/XX	Hall Hire	10.00
XX/XX/XX	5	Newsletter	35.00	6	XX/XX/XX	Newsletter	20.00
XX/XX/XX	6	Bank Interest	10.00	7	XX/XX/XX	Guides Grant	125.00
XX/XX/XX	7	Misc Income	60.00	8	XX/XX/XX	Floral Decoration	30.00
XX/XX/XX	8	Grant	50.00	9	XX/XX/XX	Competitions	25.00
XX/XX/XX	9	Newsletter	35.00	10	XX/XX/XX	Hospitality	5.00
XX/XX/XX	10	Calendar	50.00	11	XX/XX/XX	Newsletter	20.00
XX/XX/XX	11	Bus Hire	60.00	12	XX/XX/XX	Floral Decoration	30.00
XX/XX/XX	12	Donations	90.00	13	XX/XX/XX	Xmas Parcel Donation	75.00
XX/XX/XX	13	Newsletter	35.00	14	XX/XX/XX	Hall Hire	10.00
XX/XX/XX	14	Misc Income	50.00	15	XX/XX/XX	Charity Appeals	25.00
				16	XX/XX/XX	Calendar	25.00
				17	XX/XX/XX	Travel	35.00
				18	XX/XX/XX	Hospitality	10.00
				19	XX/XX/XX	Floral Decoration	30.00
				20	XX/XX/XX	Newsletter	20.00
				21	XX/XX/XX	Travel	40.00
				22	XX/XX/XX	Competitions	25.00
				23	XX/XX/XX	Hospitality	5.00
				24	XX/XX/XX	Misc Expenses	20.00
				25	XX/XX/XX	Administration	30.00
				26	XX/XX/XX	Data Protection Fee	35.00
					31/03/XX	Balance Carried Forward	235.00
Total			1040.00			Total	1040.00
Start of Next Year							
Income				Expenditure			
Date	Doc Ref	Narrative	Amount	Date	Doc Ref	Narrative	Amount
01/04/XX		Balance brought forward	235.00				

Anywhere Community Council						
Income & Expenditure Account						
Year Ending 31 March 20XX						
		31/03/XX			31/03/XW	
Income						
	Notes					
Community Council Grant		250			250	
Other Grants		150			120	
Newsletter		140			100	
Calendar		50			50	
Bus Hire		90			60	
Donations		90			95	
Bank Interest		10			10	
Miscellaneous		110	£890		100	£785
Expenditure						
Grants & Donations	1.	325			275	
Floral		120			120	
Newsletter		75			75	
Calendar		25			25	
Administration		30			30	
Hall Hire		20			20	
Travel		85			75	
Competitions		50			40	
Hospitality		20			20	
Data Protection Fee		35			35	
Miscellaneous		20	£805		20	£735
Income Over Expenditure			£85			£50
Statement of Funds						
		31/03/XX			31/03/XW	
Accumulated Fund		150			100	
Income over Expenditure		85			50	
Fund at 31.03.XX		235			150	
Represented By						
"Bank Name" Current Account		235			150	
Notes						
1. Grants & Donations						
Rainbow Club Grant	100					
Guides Grant	125					
Xmas Parcel Donation	75					
Charity Appeals	25					
	325					
Signature	(Treasurer)					
Date						
I certify that I have examined the accounts of "Anywhere Community Council". To the best of my knowledge and belief, and in accordance with the information and explanations given to me, the Accounts have been properly prepared from the records of the Community Council and are in agreement with these records						
Signature	(Independent Examiner)					
Date						
					IE Name	
					IE Address	
					IE Contact Number	

THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998**GUIDANCE NOTE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS****1 Introduction**

The Data Protection Act 1998 governs the use of personal data. It imposes important obligations on any persons or organisations, including Community Councils, which acquire, store, use or deal with personal data in any way. Failure to comply with the Act's requirements can have serious legal consequences, including claims for compensation and possible criminal proceedings.

The purpose of this note is to provide Community Councils with information regarding the Act and basic guidance on how to comply with it. More detailed guidance is available from the Information Commissioner (see Part 6 below).

2 Personal Data and Sensitive Personal Data

“Personal data” means any information by which it is possible to identify a living individual (referred to in the Act as a “data subject”). Information on individuals who have died, or on companies or other corporate bodies, is not personal data. But information regarding Community Council members, local residents, individual local authority members or employees, or any other living individual, is personal data.

“Sensitive personal data” means information regarding such things as an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, physical or mental health, sexual life and commission of a criminal offence. Special rules apply to sensitive personal data.

The Act regulates the processing of personal data. “Processing” means acquiring data, storing it, amending or augmenting it, disclosing it to third parties, deleting it – ie doing anything with it at all. An individual or organisation which processes personal data is known as the “data controller”.

The Act applies to personal data which is held in any kind of storage system, whether electronic or manual.

3 The Data Protection Principles

The Act sets out some basic rules regarding processing personal data, known as the Data Protection Principles. These include –

- Data must be processed fairly and lawfully;
- Data must be obtained for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and must not be processed in any manner incompatible with those purposes;
- Data must be adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- Data must be accurate and kept up to date;
- Data must not be kept longer than necessary;
- Data must be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights;
- Appropriate technical and organisational measures must be taken against the data's unauthorised or unlawful use and their accidental loss, damage or destruction.

4 Data Subjects' Rights

The Act gives important rights to data subjects, including the right –

- To be informed that their personal data is being processed by the data controller;
- To be given access to their personal data;
- To require their personal data not to be used for direct marketing purposes;
- To require the data controller to stop any processing of their personal data which is causing substantial and unwarranted damage or distress.

5 Contravention of the Act

If a data controller contravenes the Act, compensation may be payable to any person who suffers damage and distress because of that contravention. In some circumstances, contravention of the Act may also be a criminal offence, for which a fine may be payable.

6 The Information Commissioner

The Act is regulated and enforced by the Information Commissioner (not to be confused with the Scottish Information Commissioner, who enforces the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002). The Commissioner has powers under the Act to issue notices to data controllers, requiring them to provide him with information regarding their compliance with the Act, or to carry out certain steps under the Act. He also has power to carry out investigations, including the power to enter data controllers' premises.

The Information Commissioner's Office – Scotland
Queen Elizabeth House
Sibbald Walk
Edinburgh
EH8 8FT

The Commissioner publishes detailed guidance on various aspects of the Act. That guidance is available on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/who-we-are/scotland-office/>.

7 Notification to the Information Commissioner

All data controllers are obliged by the Act to notify the Information Commissioner of the classes of personal data which they are processing, the purposes for which they are processed and the recipients to which the data may be disclosed. This information is included in the Commissioner's Register of Notifications, which is open to public inspection. It is a criminal offence to process personal data without first notifying the Commissioner.

8 Complying with the Data Protection Act

To comply with the Act, Community Councils should take the following steps –

- 8.1 Nominate an office bearer (eg the Secretary) as the person responsible for data protection. In many organisations, this person is referred to as the Data Protection Officer.
- 8.2 Carry out a data protection audit – identify what personal data are held and who the data subjects are; ascertain the purposes for which the data are to be used; identify where and

how the data are stored or recorded.

- 8.3 Inform the data subjects in writing (a) that their personal data are held, and (b) the purposes for which the data are used.
- 8.4 Ensure that personal data is properly protected – if data are stored electronically, ensure that they are password-protected and (in sensitive cases) encrypted. If they are stored manually (eg a paper filing system), ensure that the files are kept in a secure place.
- 8.5 Ensure that personal data is never disclosed to any unauthorised third party, whether accidentally or on purpose.
- 8.6 Periodically review the personal data that are held, making sure that they remain accurate and up to date – where necessary dispose of data that are no longer needed.
- 8.7 The Information Commissioner must be notified of the personal data being processing, the purpose and the recipients to which the data may be disclosed. It is a criminal offence to process personal data without having first notified the Commissioner.

Notification can be done on-line at the Commissioner's website, by going to www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection/notification.aspx and then by following the step-by-step directions given there. The website includes standard templates for different types of organisations, including a set of local and central government templates; this includes, in turn, standard template N870 – Council (Parish and Community Councils). By clicking on that template, the standard classes and uses of personal data for Community Council are automatically included in the notification, which can then be printed, signed and sent by post to the Commissioner.

Notification costs £40 and must be renewed annually.

GDPR – Top 12 Tasks for Community Councils

Community Councils will receive and use information relating to identifiable, living individuals. This is known as “personal data”. Your organisation is also known as a “data controller” as you are processing personal data.

The purpose of this briefing note is to highlight the key changes being introduced by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the new Data Protection Act 2018 which may apply to your Community Council. This legislation is enforced by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).

Task #1: Notification. Data Controllers must pay a fee annually (starting at £40) to the ICO, unless an exemption applies. Not-for-profit organisations are not required to pay a fee in some cases, however it is recommended that you carry out the online assessment to establish whether payment of a fee is required. It can be found here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/>

Task #2: Responsibility for Data Protection. You may have heard that some organisations, such as Fife Council, are required to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO). It is unlikely that Community Councils will require a DPO however you may wish to consider nominating someone as the person responsible for data protection matters.

Task #3: Record of processing activities. Many organisations are now required to keep what is known as a “record of processing activities”. It is unlikely that Community Councils will be required to keep such a record. However, you may wish to document what records will be created or held by your Community Council and how they will be stored (eg by email; in paper files etc). It is important to know what personal information you are using and why.

Task #4: Privacy Notice. Every Data Controller must tell people how their information is used and why. This is known as a privacy notice. Data Controllers are now obliged to tell people much more information and it must be communicated in a clear, concise manner. Fife Council has opted for a layered approach. We have placed a high level corporate notice online: www.fife.gov.uk/home/privacy-policy and Services have prepared their own privacy notice to sit under this. Finally, we are arranging for all forms, letters etc to be updated to refer to these notices.

This is clearly too detailed for your purpose. We have prepared a template for completion by Elected Members and these have been uploaded to Fife Council’s website. This is attached at Appendix 4 (a). You may wish to consider adopting this or a similar approach and arrange for it to be uploaded to your Community Council website, if you have one. Once you have a privacy notice in place, you then need to consider how you can communicate this to individuals when they initially contact you. For example, do you have any forms or letters that can be updated with either this notice or the weblink? Or can you put up a poster.

Task #5: Data Sharing. If your Community Council routinely shares personal information with another organisation then you may require to formalise this arrangement through a Data Sharing Agreement or Information Sharing Protocol. In any type of data sharing, it is recommended that you keep a record of what information is shared, with whom and why.

Task #6: Consent and Processing Personal Data Lawfully. You must only process personal data where you meet one of the lawful conditions for doing so. Public authorities are no longer allowed to rely on consent however Community Councils can do so. The rules around consent have changed and you must ensure that consent is clearly obtained at the outset with the individual “opting in”. This may comprise a mandate signed by community council members confirming that they consent to the use of their personal information. This mandate could include a link to your new privacy notice (see Task #4 above). The ICO has published detailed Guidance on the use of consent together with a checklist and it can be found here: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/consent-1-0.pdf>

Please note that consent can now be withdrawn at any time and you must stop using the personal data.

The ICO has also published an interactive guidance tool so you can work out if consent is the right legal basis for you. It can be found here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/resources-and-support/lawful-basis-interactive-guidance-tool/>

Task #7: Understanding some key principles.

- Only collect and use the minimum amount of personal data necessary to carry out the task.
- You can only use the personal data for the specific purpose it was collected for. You cannot then use it for another unrelated purpose.
- You must ensure that the personal data you hold is accurate. You should carry out periodic checks to ensure the data is still accurate and up to date.
- You must not keep personal data for any longer than is necessary.
- You must ensure that personal data is held and shared securely. For example, use locked storage to keep any paper records, particularly those containing sensitive or personal data.
- Ensure you consider data protection when considering new projects.

Task #8: Data Breaches. Sent an email containing personal information to the wrong person? Lost a paper file containing personal data? You now have to report data breaches (in certain cases) to the ICO within 72 hours of someone first becoming aware of the breach. It is true that the level of fines which can be imposed by the ICO have increased for a breach of GDPR or the new Data Protection Act. They also have other enforcement powers available. You should ensure that the individual identified at Task #2 is aware of the following guidance: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/report-a-breach/>

Task #9: Subject Rights. You are probably aware that someone can request a copy of their own information (known as a Subject Access Request). This is still available under GDPR with a few changes. But there are a number of other rights available to individuals (some new, some available now) such as the “right to be forgotten”. This means that individuals can request that you remove/delete all their information (but you do not always have to comply). It is unlikely that you will routinely receive these requests however it may occur. The ICO’s Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (see details below) contains a section on this.

Task #10: Marketing. The rules on direct marketing (eg by email) have not been changed by GDPR. If you undertake any form of marketing then the ICO has a self assessment tool available: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/marketing/>

Task #11: Secure Storage. All your records must be stored securely. Paper records should be kept in locked storage and electronic files should be stored on secure drives, in the cloud or encrypted devices like a portable hard drive. Physically separate storage devices from other hardware. Back up data on a regular schedule, store backups off site securely.

Task #12: Records Retention. All your records should be kept for the right period of time and promptly and appropriately disposed of at the end of that time. For guidance on how long to keep different records for, see the Scottish Council on Archives Records Retention Schedules (SCARRS). This is a Scottish National Framework for local government records retention. A PDF of the combined schedules can be downloaded from <http://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/scarrs/schedules> . For further guidance on records retention, please contact the Council's Records Manager Meic Pierce Owen at: meic.pierceowen@fife.gov.uk

Further Information

We appreciate there is a lot of legally technical points to be considered. If we become aware of any detailed guidance for Community Councils then we will let you know. In the meantime, it is recommended that you begin to work on the above tasks if you have not already done so. We would also recommend that you read the ICO's Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation which can be found here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

You may also wish to take your own legal advice on the impact of GDPR on your Community Council or contact the ICO directly. In the meantime, if you have a specific query then the Council's DP Team would be happy to share the Council's equivalent guidance or template or refer you to the relevant ICO Guidance. The Council's DP Team comprises: Fiona Stuart; Karen Welsh or Karen Berry at: dataprotection@fife.gov.uk

Template Privacy Notice – for elected members

As a Fife Council councillor, I [elected member name] will use the information provided by you in order to represent your views and opinions and to help with any difficulties that Fife Council could help to solve. I am what's known as a data controller for this information. I am carrying out this role and using your information in order to fulfil a public function in the public interest.

The personal information that I gather and use includes your name, contact details and information relating to your query or consultation with me.

I will keep your information for [insert how long], then it will be securely destroyed.

I share your information with Services within Fife Council to ensure you are provided with help, advice or services that you are entitled to. I also share your information with my IT suppliers (via Fife Council) and with the Council's Members Service so they can provide support to me as an elected member of Fife Council [insert any other data sharing here].

In order to carry out the functions above, I may also receive information about you from Services within Council.

If you have concerns about the use of your personal data, please contact me in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office to raise your concern or complaint. The ICO can be contacted in writing at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or telephone: 0303 123 1113 or online: <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/getting/>.

RETENTION GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD	ACTION	NOTES
Minutes (Signed)	Permanent	Keep	Good practice. Keep as a historical record of the Council's activities and views on local issues.
Minutes - duplicate	Current	Destroy	Destroy other copies of minutes as soon as they are no longer needed
Secretary's notes of meeting	Keep until minutes approved at the next meeting	Destroy	Common practice.
General Correspondence	3 years	Destroy	* No legal requirement, how long is it useful to you?
Correspondence relating to planning applications and rights of way	5 years	Destroy	*No legal requirement, how long is it useful to you?
Circulars and reports from Fife Council and other bodies	Current	Destroy	Common practice destroy when superseded or no longer needed for reference
Annual statement of accounts and main account book	Permanent	Keep	Good practice. Keep as a historical record of the Council's activities and views on local issues. (Statutory requirement to keep for minimum of current financial year plus 6 years)

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD	ACTION	NOTES
Invoices, receipts, cheque stubs, bank statements, bank paying in book, petty cash records, insurance claims	Current financial year plus 6 years	Destroy	Statutory. (VAT regulations & may be required for Audit)
Complaints	5 years	Destroy	Common practice

Andrew Dowsey, Archives and Local Studies Team Leader, Service Development (Heritage & Art), Fife Cultural Trust, Bank Head Central, Bank Head Park, Glenrothes, KY7 6GH (Tel 03451 55555 Ext. 440197) Email: andrew.dowsey@onfife.com

Summary of Insurance Cover for Community Councils

Policy Details

Insurer: Zurich Municipal **Policy Number:** YLL-272016-3513

Policy Period: 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Insured: Fife Council on Behalf of Specified Community Councils

The policy provides the following insurance cover.

1. Public Liability

This section of the policy provides Community Councils with cover for claims from any third party for bodily injury or loss or damage to property occurring as a result of the activities of the Community Council. For a claim to be successful it must be shown that the Community Council, or its representatives have been negligent in some way. This section of the policy will include volunteers.

The limit of cover under this section of the policy is £5,000,000. There is an excess of £100 on each and every claim

Liability Insurance for Events Public

The policy automatically provides cover for events such as Galas, Fetes, Dances organised by a Community Council, provided there will be no more than 500 expected attendees, and it does not involve Bonfires, Fireworks, Play Inflatables.

It is possible to apply for cover to be extended to cover events with attendance exceeding 500 and/or that involve Bonfires, Fireworks, or Play Inflatables.

The provision of First Aid facilities will be essential and where the event involves the use of Bonfires, Fireworks or Play Inflatables, the Community Council must ensure that risk assessments are completed and comply with all relevant industry and Health and Safety Executive guidance.

Events cover applications must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the event. The Special Event Enquiry Template in Appendix 1 should be used to apply for cover to be extended to include your event. This should be sent to Risk Management Team by email, Risk.Management@fife.gov.uk

Insurers may charge an additional premium to extend cover for your event.

Public Liability Insurance for Emergency Resilience Activities

The policy provides cover for Emergency Resilience (including Covid-19) activities notified to insurers. If your Community Council undertakes Emergency Resilience activities, you must notify Risk Management Team so that they can advise insurers and ensure the cover is in place

2. Libel and Slander

This section provides cover for claims from any third party against the Community Council for any libels appearing in any Community Council publications or Minutes of Community Council meetings or any slanders in oral utterances made in the discharge of official Community Council duties by any member or employee. The sum insured is £100,000 with an excess of £1,000 or 10% of each and every claim whichever is the lowest.

3. Fidelity Guarantee

The policy provides cover for loss of money or property belonging to the Community Council, or in its trust or custody and for which it is responsible, caused as a result of fraud or dishonesty committed by a member of the Community Council. The limit of cover under this section of the Policy is £2,500 with £100 excess on each and every claim.

4. Money

This section of the policy provides cover for loss of money by theft in various circumstances. The limit of cover is £1,000 whilst money is in transit in the custody of a Community Council member or employee, or in transit by registered post (limit £250), or in a Bank Night Safe. For money that is on Community Council premises either in the custody of or under the actual supervision of any member or employee or held within a safe or strong room is £1,000.

The limit of cover for money that is in the private residence of a member or employee or in the Community Council premises locked in a receptacle other than a safe or strong room is £250. The policy excess is £50 on each and every claim.

5. All Risks

This provides cover for damage to or theft of, property owned by the Community Council to a limit of £270. Property would include record books, stationery etc. There is an excess of £100. Any additional specific item(s) can be covered for the value of the item subject to the excess. If you wish to enquire about insuring any additional item(s), please email Risk Management Team, Risk.Management@fife.gov.uk

6. Personal Accident

This section provides benefits to members of the Community Council or volunteers who are accident or assault victims whilst on official Community Council business. There is a capital sum payable in case of death or permanent total disablement up to a maximum of £10,000. There is also a weekly benefit payable in the event of temporary total disablement of £25 per week for a maximum of 104 weeks.

In the event of an incident occurring under any of the above insured sections, you should contact Risk Management Team by emailing Risk.Management@fife.gov.uk

NB All insurance policies have various exclusions and conditions to be applied and obviously, it is not possible to outline all of these. If you require more specific information in a particular section of the policy, please do not hesitate to contact the Risk Management Team.

Appendix 6.1

Special Event Enquiry Template

Policy Number: YLL-272016-3513

- 1. Name of Organisation:**
- 2. Date of Event:**
- 3. Type of event, e.g., fete, bonfire, fireworks event, street party:**
- 4. Premises/location of event:**
- 5. Estimated attendance at the event, at any one time (not throughout the day):**
- 6. What limit of indemnity do you require? £5 million or Other? If other, please specify:**
- 7. Please supply what first aid facilities will be provided:**
- 8. How many Marshall's will be provided and what will their duties be?**
- 9. Will the police be in attendance?**
- 10. Please specify which stalls, attractions, and catering facilities etc you will be managing yourselves e.g., tug of war, provision of non-alcoholic refreshments, tombola, bouncy castle, bonfire only, bonfire and fireworks etc. If you are responsible for erecting and dismantling equipment e.g., marquees, staging:**
- 11. Please specify what voluntary organisations or commercial operators will be attending the event and what they will be planning on doing:**
- 12. Will the event include fireworks? If yes, are you letting them off yourselves or will an external company with their own insurance be doing this?**
- 13. Please advise of any additional information that you wish to inform us of:**

Please email completed Special Event Enquiry Template to Risk.Management@fife.gov.uk at least 4 weeks prior to the event

FIFE COUNCIL

GUIDANCE FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Introduction

Social media enables engagement with your community and the wider public and Community Councils should seek to encourage information sharing amongst your members, the community, and volunteers. You should also utilise the expertise of your members and volunteers in generating appropriate social media content. At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that the Community Council wishes to present to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage your reputation. There should be no posts which could bring your Community Council's political status into question.

Forms of Social Media

Social media describes a range of websites and online tools which allow people to interact. Examples of social media include: blogs; wikis; RSS feeds; social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn or MySpace; microblogs such as Twitter; photo sharing sites such as Flickr; content sharing or bookmarking sites such as Digg and Delicious; customer feedback sites such as Yelp; and video sharing sites such as YouTube. The term social media also includes the Instant Messaging functionality of internal applications such as Outlook Email and Skype for Business, as well as blogs and discussion forums that can be created through SharePoint and other tools.

Facebook

Facebook is an important tool for Community Councils and is an effective way to connect with residents, introduce the Community Council, and to reach out to people who may wish to give their views but find it difficult to attend meetings.

It might be tempting to set one up for your Community Council if you already have your own Facebook profile, but it is important to note that Facebook actively searches for and deletes profiles representing organisations. This is because profiles were designed solely to represent an individual, and not an organisation or a group. You should consider creating **Facebook pages or a group**.

Facebook Pages

Facebook Pages or profiles allow your Community Council to have a public Facebook presence, which is visible on search engines such as Google, and can act as an extension of your own Community Council website.

Facebook Pages have administrators (Admins), who are Facebook users and have been given permission to post on behalf of the Community Council. When Admins post content to the page's timeline, by default the posts show up as the page's name and not as the Admin's. You can also customise the name of your Page as *facebook.com/yourcommunitycouncil*.

Facebook Groups

Groups are better used for smaller collections of people and generally have a more personal feel to them. Groups have the advantage of customised privacy through public or invite-only access. You are also able to send Messages to members of a Group, which is helpful for coordinating group activities or discussions. In addition, Groups allow individuals to schedule events and even share documents with other members.

Unlike Pages, though, Groups cannot have their own Facebook URL which can make it more difficult to find in search engines. You must be logged in to Facebook to be able to see the Group or to join the Group. Another notable difference is that when owners of the Group post, they show up as their personal Profile rather than showing up as the Group.

Facebook Groups and Pages

Community Councils can use both Groups and Pages by creating a Page for their Community Council as a whole, then set up a Group for a specific target audience like local residents or for all members of the Community Council.

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 280 characters, known as "tweets".

A Twitter page can be used by any Community Council as long as they are willing and receptive to engage with their community in this way and is a useful platform to engage in a quick and effective way. It is an especially useful tool for getting a brief message out to a wide audience, such as publicising a community event.

Responsibilities

Any communication is capable of being misinterpreted. The immediacy of social media and the lack of face to face contact can magnify any problems. Information and comments made can be broadcast to a large number of people more quickly than other media. The same rules apply to social media that govern other behaviour as a councillor – but extra care needs to be taken given the immediacy and ease of dissemination. Although social media is conversational in tone, it is recorded, and it is permanent, so content and comment must be accurate, informative and thought through.

The Community Council's social media represents the collective Community Council membership and should maintain a professional and uniform tone at all times. Community Council members may, from time to time and as appropriate (e.g. as previously agreed and minuted by the collective membership of the Community Council), post on behalf of the Community Council using its online profiles.

Community Councils should not knowingly post (or enable postings from third parties) which include incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals or which do not comply with its commitment to Equal Opportunities or apolitical activities. In addition, it will post in accordance with relevant organisations' Copyright and Privacy policies.

Information Sharing

The Community Council should encourage the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members. Before social media posts are made, Community Council members should consider:

- Is the information I am posting, or reposting, likely to be of interest to the members and community?
- Is the information in keeping with the objectives of the Community Council?
- Could the post be construed as an attack on another individual, organisation or project?
- If there is a link attached to the post, does the link work, and have I read the information it links to and judged it to be an appropriate source?
- If reposting information, is the original poster an individual or organisation that the Community Council would be happy to associate itself with?
- Are the tone and the content of the post in keeping with other posts made by the Community Council? Does it maintain the organisation's overall tone?
- If there is any uncertainty about whether a post is suitable, it should not be posted (or enabled to be posted) until the item has been reviewed by the Communications Officer. A few moments spent checking can ensure that the Community Council's integrity is not compromised.

Inappropriate Posts

In the event of a damaging or misleading post being made, the Community Council should:

- remove the offending post immediately;
- where appropriate, issue an apology, either publicly or to the individual or organisation involved; and
- explore the origin of the offending post and take steps to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future e.g. blocking posts which do not comply with the Scheme

Moderating social media

It is important to maintain the reputation of the Community Council, through establishing a safe and friendly environment for its members. From time to time social media forums may be hijacked by trolls, spammers, or attract people who attack other posters or the Community Council aggressively. In order to maintain a pleasant environment for everybody, these posts need to be moderated.

Freedom of speech is to be encouraged, but posts should not contain the following:

- Excessive or inappropriate use of swearing;
- Defamatory or aggressive attacks on the Community Council, other individuals, organisations, projects or public figures;
- Breach of copyrighted material not within reasonable use, in the public domain, or available under Creative Commons license;
- Breach of data protection or privacy laws;
- Repetitive advertisements;
- Topics which fall outside the realms of interest to members and the community, and which do not appear to be within the context of a legitimate discussion or enquiry.

If an individual continues to post inappropriate content, or if the post can be considered spam:

- Remove the post as soon as possible;
- If possible/appropriate, contact the individual privately to explain why you have removed the post and highlight the Community Council's appropriate use of social media policy;
- Ban or block the individual to prevent them from posting again.

Banning and blocking should be used as a last resort only, and only when it is clear that the individual intends to continue to contribute inappropriate content. However, if that is the case, action must be taken swiftly to maintain the welfare of other social media users. The decision to block, ban and remove posts is the responsibility of the Community Council.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result.

They were originally launched in 2005 and since then they have been used to support community engagement, and user involvement, in Scotland in areas such as community planning and health and social care. They have been widely accepted by a range of practitioners as key principles for effective practice.

During 2015/2016, the National Standards for Community Engagement were reviewed and updated. The aim of this review was to reflect the developing policy and legislation relating to community empowerment in Scotland, and to build on the growing range of practice. The review process was very inclusive and drew on contributions from a wide range of community organisations, third sector (voluntary) organisations and public sector bodies. To download a copy of the National Standards please [click here](#).

The Involvement Standard

We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.

The Support Standard

We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.

The Planning Standard

We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.

The Methods Standard

We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.

The Working Together Standard

We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another efficiently and effectively.

The Sharing Information Standard

We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.

The Working with Others Standard

We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.

The Improvement Standard

We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

The Feedback Standard

We will feedback the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Standard

We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the National Standards for Community Engagement.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS GUIDANCE

See Section 6.0 of the Scheme – ‘Meetings’.

Effective meetings are important not just in ensuring the Community Council progresses what it is doing and any decisions which are made, but also in keeping members and others involved and interested. Meetings that drag on and on, with people straying off the point, not listening or being discourteous, can be a disincentive to even the most committed member. Good meetings are not just about getting things done but about respect and consideration for others.

1. AGENDAS

For all Community Council meetings - Ordinary, Annual General Meeting and Special Meetings - an agenda should be published by the Secretary at least seven days prior to the meeting taking place so that members and the public know what is to be discussed and can be prepared in advance. A standard format for agendas could include:

***Meeting of the NAME Community Council
at TIME on DAY, MONTH and YEAR in VENUE***

AGENDA

- (1) *Recording of membership present and apologies received.*
- (2) *The minutes of the last meeting are submitted for accuracy and approval.*
- (3) *Any matters arising (not already on the agenda) are addressed.*
- (4) *Correspondence (the Secretary should consider producing a ‘list of correspondence’ to be sent out with the agenda).*
- (5) *Reports, i.e., Treasurer; Elected Members; Police; Weekly Planning List; Licensing etc.*
- (6) *Consideration of other agreed items of business; as directed by the Chairperson*
- (7) *Any other competent business (AOCB).*
- (8) *Questions from the floor.*

Chairperson to declare date of next meeting and close meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

The apology of any Community Councillor who is unable to attend should be recorded in the minutes. This is important as a Community Councillor can be censured / vote of no confidence / disqualified if they fail to attend regularly and/or miss a specified number of consecutive meetings without good reason with or without submitting apologies.

It is also important to record who is present, so that it will be known in the future which Community Councillors put their names to any particular decision.

3. MINUTES

It is a requirement of the Scheme for formal minutes to be kept. This is usually the responsibility of the Secretary but the Community Council may agree to appoint from within itself, or engage for reasonable payment or otherwise, a Minute Secretary. This can free the Secretary to take a more active part in the discussions.

The draft Minutes should be circulated to all members, and to those others present at the meeting, to confirm the accuracy of the minute. It is good practice to circulate the draft Minutes within 7 days of the meeting. If there are occasions when this is not possible, the minutes should be circulated to members as soon as they are available. The Chairperson will, at the next meeting, ask whether everyone who attended the meeting is in agreement that the minutes are a true record of the meeting. If any member wishes to query any point this is the time to do it.

Once the minutes are formally approved, they cannot be changed. Only the minute of the previous meeting can be discussed and agreed at this stage. Discussions on the merits of any previously recorded decision should not be opened up at this point. A member should then propose the formal approval of the minutes as a true record. It is advisable to also seek a seconder to the formal approval.

If there are still objections, the matter should be put to the vote; the minutes can be formally approved by a simple majority or unanimously. This is recorded in the minutes of the current meeting. As in any other disagreement, a member whose views are not accepted and rejected on a vote can request that their dissent be recorded in the minutes.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTE

Community Councils should avoid re-visiting any previously agreed decisions following approval of the minutes. The current meeting's agenda should ensure that previous and ongoing items are not forgotten, and that actions identified and taken up by members at the previous meeting, have been carried out. As all discussion is recorded in the current minute, items which have been completed can drop out, and items still ongoing remain to automatically come up at the next meeting. Any correspondence received relative to matters being discussed, and especially if requiring action, is best presented by the Secretary at the appropriate point.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

During correspondence, any letters, emails and telephone calls received since the previous meeting are made available by the Secretary for consideration and decisions for actions. To save time potentially long items need not be read out but referred to and made available for perusal.

Good practice would include compiling a correspondence 'bullet' list and circulating it with the agenda and draft minute prior to the next meeting. Attention may also be drawn to any short timescales or deadlines for responding. The Secretary and Chairperson may wish to discuss the most appropriate action to take, e.g., sharing information with members prior to the date of the next meeting and outlining any actions or decisions required.

6. REPORTS

Reports is the point in the meeting when regular attendees such as the local Community Police, Councillors and other Elected Members; Associate Members and Community Council representatives of any working groups or sub-committees, may give a brief update to the Community Council, advising on progress. Some reports will be regular, e.g., the Treasurer's report, whilst others will be occasional, e.g., Special Interest Items. For information, see section 7.0 on Report Writing).

7. SPECIAL INTEREST ITEMS – VISITING SPEAKERS

When there is an item of special interest it should be given its own spot on the agenda. It may be a presentation by a visiting speaker - in which case it can be a matter of common courtesy for the Chairperson to advance the item to the start of the meeting so the visitor does not have to sit through the routine business. This is not only common courtesy but particularly important if the speaker has far to travel, enabling them to get away as early as possible.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer should report on the financial situation of the Community Council at each meeting, on any money received and spent, and consider other budgetary related activity. At the very least, the Treasurer should state the current bank balance taken from the monthly bank statement including any income received or expenditure incurred since the previous meeting.

9. WEEKLY PLANNING LIST

Planning is often a key concern of Community Councils and to the general public. Community Councils should have a regular slot on their agenda to deal with planning matters - Development Planning applications and any response; considering current or emerging Local Development Plans; and responses to other forms of consultation.

Community Councils may consider establishing sub-committees or working groups to deal with planning issues, given the short timescales involved on occasion, and the degree of scrutiny often required. Any sub-committee or working group may meet between scheduled Community Council meetings (taking cognisance of closing dates for Planning responses), and report back to the main Community Council as appropriate.

10. LIQUOR LICENSING

Liquor licensing matters can also be a source of concern, and should likewise have a regular slot on the agenda. For those Community Councils experiencing a high volume of licensing matters, it may again be useful to establish a sub-committee or working group.

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS (AOCB)

AOCB gives members the chance to raise issues and, in particular, matters brought to them by the public. Ideally, the Chairperson will move round the table giving each member the chance to raise topics in turn, time permitting. It should be expected that it may be more appropriate for some topics to form an item for the next agenda, to allow enough time for adequate and informed discussion.

12. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It is important that everyone present knows or is reminded of the date, time and venue of the next meeting before the meeting breaks up, even if there is an existing published timetable of meetings.

13. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM) AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

For every year at the AGM, a Community Council may consider election of office bearers – one year generally being the minimum period of time an office bearer is appointed. Although office bearers may be appointed for the term of office (4 years), until the next Community Council election.

At an AGM, normally the outgoing Chairperson will hold the position until the new Chairperson is elected unless they are also standing for this office. In which case, another member of the Community Council who is not standing for office should preside.

Upon election, the new Chairperson takes on the Chairing role for the rest of the meeting. Under some circumstances, meetings may be more efficiently conducted on the basis that the outgoing Chairperson fully concludes the meeting before handing over.

In normal circumstances no other matters may be raised at the AGM other than those on the set agenda. The AGM agenda will have been published at least seven days before the meeting. Although the previous year's AGM minutes receive final approval at the following year's AGM, the Secretary, and other members, should consider circulating the draft minutes of AGMs at the next following scheduled Ordinary meeting of the Community Council for approval in principle (rather than waiting 12 months).

The agenda for Special Meetings must be restricted to only those items requiring the convening of a special meeting. No other matters must be discussed. Any special resolutions should be passed or rejected as printed on the agenda. Any alteration should only be made with the consent of those present and then only if the Constitution allows for the printed resolution to be amended. A typical agenda for a Special Meeting could be:

***Special Meeting of the NAME Community Council
at TIME on DAY, MONTH, YEAR in VENUE
AGENDA***

- (1) Recording of membership present and apologies received.
- (2) The nature of the calling notice for the Special Meeting.
- (3) The business for debate, as described in the calling notice for the Special Meeting.
- (4) Chairperson to close meeting.

All Community Councillors present may vote; there is no provision for proxy votes. Minutes will be taken of the meeting and considered at the next regular meeting unless the meeting was held in private, e.g., a special meeting convened to consider a public complaint.

14. MEETING VENUES AND PUBLIC VISIBILITY

All regularly scheduled Ordinary meetings and Annual General Meetings (AGMs) are open to the public and members of the public should be encouraged to attend. Wherever possible, meetings should be held in an accessible venue within the Community Council boundary area, which is warm and open for people arriving, with accompanying tea and coffee (optional). If accessible venues are not available a suitable venue should be used.

Community Councils should consider having a minimum of three public notices displaying the date, time and venue of the meeting (not applicable to 'complaints' meetings), and ideally including the agenda for the next meeting. A list of meeting dates for the year ahead could be made available, and 'special items' could be highlighted to attract local interest. Notices should be displayed on websites, media pages, notice boards, shop windows or any other central place within the community.

15. MEETING LAYOUT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

The recommended meeting layout for Community Council meetings is the U-Shape (boardroom style):

The layout consists of a series of rectangular tables set out in the shape of the letter U, with chairs placed around the outside for Community Councillors to sit.

- This layout style is often used for committee meetings e.g. Community Councils, where there is an audience, speaker, presentation or other focal point.
- The U-Shape is one of the most popular seating arrangements and can easily cater for members of the public, up to circa 50, attending a meeting sitting in rows facing the Community Council members.
- This seating also lends itself to training sessions and speaker presentations. It is also a good setup for focus groups.
- The openness of this setup gives each participant space that encourages wider participation because there is no preferential seating and all seats have an equally good view of the meeting inputs.
- This set up is more likely to: provide productive work space; encourage good interaction between participants; and because seating is around three sides of the room – it enables the public to clearly see the Community Council members as distinct from the public attendees.
- However, if attendee numbers become too large e.g. over 50 then consideration may lead to adopting a more suitable meeting layout e.g. theatre layout.

16. KEY ROLES OF COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS AT MEETINGS

See Section 3.0 of this Booklet – "Office Bearers' Roles' for specifics relating to the role of Chairperson; Secretary and Treasurer in meetings (and outwith meetings).

It is often the case that **members** are championing specific areas of the Community Council's work and they may be doing that through leading sub-committees. If this is the case then it is often important that they consider producing short summary reports or equivalent for the full Community Council meeting. They have a duty not to bring all the detailed discussions of a sub-

group into the full meeting, but to summarise the key issues; the progress being made; and to highlight any decisions that need to be made by the full meeting.

Similarly, the **Treasurer** should have produced a financial report for the regular and full meetings to enable the Community Council to look at and go over the main points as required and highlight areas where decisions or action may be required – at the very least this should be a statement of the current balance should there have been no financial activity since the previous meeting.

One of the main roles at the meeting for the **Secretary** (or Minute Secretary if appointed) is to formally record and produce the Minutes of the meeting. Taking formal Minutes is a commonly underrated skill. One of the main abilities within this skill is to be able to summarise a discussion focusing in on the following:

- topic being discussed;
- important facts;
- any significant points made;
- any major decisions made;
- actions agreed;
- timescales; and
- who is tasked with any actions.

Minutes are not required to be a verbatim account.

Everyone on the Community Council has a role in supporting the Chairperson in their efforts to make the meeting business-like, well-timed, pleasant and inclusive.

17. WORKING EFFECTIVELY AT MEETINGS

Meetings are important to the work of Community Councils. At meetings, opinions, ideas, feelings, good intentions etc. become decisions, and those decisions will ultimately be translated into practical action in the community. To influence what is going on in the community, it is vital that attendees participate effectively in the meeting.

Individuals present may have different, sometimes opposing views, therefore, it is important that meetings are Chaired effectively to ensure a balance between hearing what everyone has to say on a subject and getting through all the items of the agenda.

If there is something of major significance that an individual wants to raise at a meeting, the Chairperson, Secretary, and/or Treasurer will ideally be advised in advance, so that it may be included as an item on the agenda for the meeting. This means that the Chairperson can try to ensure that sufficient time is made available to discuss the item. An individual requesting an item on an agenda should be prepared to make a brief verbal representation to the meeting, setting out:

- the background to the item;
- what they think the central issue is;
- what they think ought to be done about it.

Be prepared to actively listen to other people's ideas on the matter; they may have information on the subject that you do not, that may help you to see things from a different perspective, or they may come up with ideas that offer a better solution. The key activity for a good Community Councillor is to make things happen for the community. Discussion, seeking consensus and

collective decision-making should be common practice; 'point scoring' at meetings should be avoided.

A member may be asked to participate in a sub-committee or working group of the Community Council in order to research some points for a future meeting of the Community Council. Sub-committees can play an important part in clarifying issues so that decision-making is easier. Sub-committees may involve some extra time commitment and members should try as far as possible to get involved so that the work of the Community Council is spread evenly and they get a deeper insight into what is going on at Community Council meetings.

A formal record of what was agreed at sub-committee meetings should be kept in an appropriate format. This formal record will be presented to the full Community Council meeting and will usually determine exactly what action is to be taken.

As a general rule, it is much easier to influence decisions by working together and co-operating, rather than by confrontation. This is equally true whether in meetings, in dealings with other members or in correspondence, e.g. when writing to Officials of the Local Authority.

Community Councils making a positive contribution can gain respect and be increasingly involved in consultations on any proposals affecting their community. It is crucial that effective working relationships are established.

18. USING TIME EFFECTIVELY AT MEETINGS

It is necessary to take a fairly disciplined approach to the use of time at meetings. Perhaps the single most damaging thing for any Community Council is unproductive meetings where the discussion is not focused on issues of importance to the community and where those doing the talking are more interested in their personal agenda than the agenda of the Community Council.

For those less used to public speaking or debating, it is sometimes useful to write down in brief on a piece of paper or card the particular points you wish to raise. This can help to concentrate thoughts and further discussion.

19. ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

It can be more difficult to deal with matters that are not practical issues such as 'grass cutting' or 'potholes in the road' and while these 'bread and butter' issues are an important part of the work of a Community Council, there are other matters which may appear to be less obviously important in the short term, but which may have a future bigger impact on the community, e.g.:

- changing economic conditions
- population changes in the local community
- long-term development proposals

Placing too much emphasis on 'everyday' issues should not lead the Community Council to overlook matters like the ones above which are of strategic importance to the community. To ensure this does not happen, Community Council members should think as a collective body and work effectively with Local Elected Members to progress other matters.

Try to be clear about which issues are most important for the community and which to allocate most time to. This may mean choosing between the short-term and longer-term matters. Always remember that strategic issues are important and should not be set aside simply because there is another issue that appears on the surface to be more urgent.

One way to get through complex issues that are important and long term is to break them down into chunks and deal with them one by one over a series of meetings.

Another approach would be to split up the task and allocate responsibility for bits of the task to different individuals or working groups/Sub-Committees of the Community Council.

Alternatively, Community Councils can deal with ongoing issues by requesting individual members with specific knowledge, experience or interest, to take on the role of 'looking out' for news on issues in local press or in the public sphere generally. This would also help in dealing with the wide range of consultation documents that Community Councils may be asked to respond to.

20. PREPARATION BEFORE AND ACTION AFTER MEETINGS

To assist with preparation before a meeting and actions afterwards it is best practice that the minutes are produced as soon as possible after a meeting and sent out to Community Council members and/or sub-committees so that people can see what was said; what had been agreed; and what would be done before the next meeting. The minutes should be sent to those who attended the meeting and to others who missed the meeting or who may be expected to do something as a result of the meeting.

The Secretary will, within 7 days from the date of the meeting (or as soon as possible after the date of the meeting and within 14 days), make the approved draft minute available to the public for inspection, eg, via websites; posted in libraries and/or other appropriate public space.

It is important to make the minutes of meetings publicly available so that the wider community has an understanding of what the Community Council and its members are doing. The minutes should also be written in such a way that it is easy to identify what actions and timescales have been agreed and who is responsible.

21. SUB-COMMITTEES (OR WORKING GROUPS)

It is common for Community Councils to set up sub-committees (or working groups) to look at particular issues, or deal with work that has tight deadlines. Sub-committees can prevent any one activity from overshadowing the agenda of a full Community Council meeting. In addition, a dedicated sub-committee can focus on its specific project or task and spend more time on the detail.

It is important that there are good connections and feedback between the sub-committee and the full Community Council meeting. When a need for a sub-committee has been identified, it should have a clear remit for its work; what it can and cannot decide upon; and what has to be given final approval by the Community Council. The full Community Council holds ultimate responsibility for the recommendations and actions of the sub-committees, and therefore the full Community Council must agree any important decisions it makes.

A Community Council sub-committee may operate independently from the Community Council or in the event that the Community Council ceases to operate (is dissolved). In which case, the sub-committee could operate as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). See website for further information: link - <https://www.oscr.org.uk/becoming-a-charity/becoming-a->

[scio](#). Fife Voluntary Action provides assistance to voluntary organisations. See website for further information: <https://www.fva.org/>.

22. CHECKLIST FOR MEETINGS

- (1) Do meetings start on time and finish on time?
- (2) Do meetings never or rarely exceed two hours in length?
- (3) Does everyone turn up? If not, have they put in their apologies?
- (4) Has everyone prepared by reading previous minutes and aware of the agenda?
- (5) Do minutes go out early after a meeting?
- (6) Are the minutes usually short and accurately reflect discussion, decisions and actions agreed?
- (7) Are the action points clearly stated?
- (8) Are they sent to everyone who should see them?
- (9) Does the Chairperson or other member follow up in between meetings to see what progress is being made and that people are geared up to report back at the next meeting?
- (10) Does the Chairperson work with the Secretary and any others to set the agenda ahead of the next meeting?

23. MEMBERS' INTERESTS - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

See **Section 11.0 of the Scheme** – 'Declarations of Interest'.

All members shall declare in advance any financial or other interest however minor that they or any person connected with them may have in any matter which comes before the Community Council for consideration and withdraw from the meeting if required.

If a member is unclear whether a matter is sufficiently material as to require them to make a declaration of interest, they should still declare it for the Community Council to take a view and to decide if the member should make a formal declaration of interest and withdraw.

Unless those members present who have been requested to form a view are not in a simple majority whether or not the matter requires a declaration of interest, the member will require to make a personal decision whether to declare and withdraw.

A Community Councillor, knowingly failing to declare an interest and withdraw, may be censured and possibly disqualified from membership.