MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

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Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Committees

1. Background

The purpose of the Scheme of Delegation is to support council efficiency by formally transferring authority for routine operations and day-to-day administrative decisions from the Full Council to specified committees and officers. This transfer of power is legally enabled under Section 101(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits a local authority to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a committee, a sub-committee, or an officer of the council. Adopting this scheme does not diminish the council's ultimate authority; under Section 101(6) of the same Act, the Full Council legally retains sole responsibility for non-delegable statutory duties, including setting the precept, authorising loans, and approving the annual accounts. This framework ensures that while routine matters are dealt with by staff, all major financial and strategic choices remain firmly in the hands of elected members.

2. Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer to act on behalf of Melbourn Parish Council in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The purpose of this scheme is to:

- Enable the efficient day-to-day administration of Council business.
- Ensure timely decision-making between Council meetings.
- Clarify matters delegated to the Clerk.
- Maintain appropriate accountability through reporting arrangements.

All powers delegated under this scheme shall be exercised in accordance with:

- The Council's Standing Orders.
- The Council's Financial Regulations.
- The Council's adopted policies.
- Approved budgets.
- Relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

Matters specifically reserved to Full Council by law or Standing Orders are excluded from this scheme. The following matters are reserved to Full Council by legislation, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

- Setting the budget.
- Setting the precept.
- Borrowing.
- Approval of Accounting Statements.
- Approval of Annual Governance Statements.
- Approval of AGAR.
- Declaring eligibility for General Power of Competence.

- Responding to internal and external audit recommendations.

3. General Principles

3.1. The Clerk shall exercise delegated powers reasonably, proportionately and in the best interests of the Council.

3.2. Delegated decisions must be:
- Within approved budgets;
- Within policy approved by the Council; and
- Reported to Council where appropriate.

Nothing within this scheme prevents the Clerk from referring any matter to Full Council where, in their professional judgement, it is appropriate to do so.

Where powers are delegated to the Clerk under this Scheme, the Clerk may authorise another employee to undertake administrative actions necessary to implement those powers, provided that overall responsibility remains with the Clerk.

4. Internal Officer Delegation

The Clerk, as Proper Officer, may delegate any administrative or operational function conferred by this Scheme to the Deputy Clerk or another suitably qualified employee of the Council where such delegation is necessary for the efficient conduct of Council business.

Any such delegation:
- shall remain under the supervision and control of the Clerk;
- shall not exceed the powers delegated to the Clerk under this Scheme;
- shall comply with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, adopted policies and statutory requirements;
- shall not include any matter specifically reserved by statute, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or Council resolution to Full Council, a committee, the Chair or the Responsible Financial Officer;
- shall be limited to the period and purpose for which the delegation is required.

In the temporary absence, incapacity or unavailability of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk may exercise the delegated powers of the Clerk where necessary for the continuation of Council business, subject to the limitations contained within this Scheme and any specific directions of the Council.

5. Proper Officer Functions

The Clerk is authorised to:
- Carry out the statutory duties of Proper Officer.
- Serve summonses and notices for meetings.
- Prepare agendas and reports.
- Publish minutes and statutory notices.
- Maintain registers and records.
- Manage and respond to correspondence.
- Execute Council decisions and instructions.
- Deal with routine communications on behalf of the Council.
- Arrange elections and liaise with electoral authorities when necessary.

Where the Clerk is unavailable, references in this Scheme to the Clerk shall include the Deputy Clerk when acting as Proper Officer or under delegated authority.

6. Administration

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Manage the day-to-day administration of the Council.
- Supervise Council staff.
- Maintain Council records.
- Maintain the Council website and social media platforms.
- Respond to routine enquiries.
- Liaise with local authorities, contractors, utility providers and partner organisations.
- Arrange routine maintenance and repair of Council owned assets.
- Obtain quotations where required by Financial Regulations.
- Commission routine works within approved budgets.

7. Financial Delegation

The Responsible Financial Officer is authorised to:

- Manage the Council's accounting systems.
- Maintain accounting records.
- Prepare budget monitoring reports.
- Submit VAT claims and statutory returns.
- Manage payroll and pension administration.
- Invest temporary surplus funds in approved accounts.
- Pay invoices and recurring expenditure approved within the annual budget.
- Apply for appropriate grant funding on behalf of the Council – reporting to the next appropriate meeting as required.

7.1. Delegated Expenditure

a. A delegated committee may authorise expenditure up to:
   £5,000 per item within an approved budget heading.
b. The Clerk may authorise expenditure up to:
   £1,000 per item within an approved budget heading.

Where expenditure exceeds these thresholds, prior approval of Council shall be required unless covered by emergency powers.

7.2. Emergency Expenditure

a. The Clerk may authorise expenditure up to:
   £2,000 per item in cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on council premises.

b. The Clerk in consultation with the Chair and supported by email approval process and majority vote may authorise expenditure up to:
   £5,000 per item in cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on council premises.

c. The Clerk and Chair may authorise expenditure up to:

£15,000 per item where immediate action relating to emergency maintenance is required to protect Parish assets and the Hub business, subject to retrospective approval by Full Council and the obtaining of appropriate cost estimates where practicable.

7.3. Grant Funding

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Identify and investigate grant and funding opportunities relevant to the Council's functions and objectives.
- Prepare and submit applications for grants, funding bids and expressions of interest where:
    - the project has been approved by the Council;
    - the activity is included within an adopted Council strategy, action plan or budget; or
    - the application does not commit the Council to unapproved expenditure or future liabilities.
- Liaise with funding bodies and provide supporting information required as part of an application process.
- Accept grant awards where acceptance does not commit the Council to unbudgeted expenditure, borrowing, additional staffing liabilities, land acquisition, or ongoing contractual obligations. All grant awards accepted under delegated authority shall be reported to the next Council meeting.
- Sign routine grant documentation and claims forms on behalf of the Council as Proper Officer.

The following matters shall remain reserved to Full Council:

- Applications requiring match funding not previously approved by Council.
- Applications that create ongoing financial commitments, additional staffing requirements or significant new obligations for the Council.
- Entry into funding agreements involving the acquisition or disposal of land, long-term leases or borrowing.

The Clerk shall report all grant applications submitted and grant awards received under delegated authority to the next available Council meeting.

8. Contracts and Procurement

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Obtain quotations and tenders in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- Place orders for approved works and services.
- Sign routine purchase orders and service agreements.
- Manage contractor performance.

The Clerk may not enter into contracts exceeding delegated financial limits without Council approval. All procurement activity shall comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, including requirements relating to estimates, quotations, tenders and procurement thresholds.

9. Staffing

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Manage Council employees on a day-to-day basis.
- Approve annual leave.
- Conduct employee appraisals and performance reviews in accordance with adopted staffing procedures.
- Arrange training within budget.
- Implement approved staffing policies.

The following remain reserved to Council:

- Creation of new posts.
- Permanent appointments to positions.
- Changes to salary scales.
- Formal disciplinary dismissal decisions.

10. Property and Assets

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Arrange routine maintenance and repairs.
- Commission inspections.
- Manage facilities bookings.
- Manage allotments, leases and licences within approved policy.
- Maintain asset registers.
- Ensure insurance cover remains adequate.

No acquisition or disposal of land shall take place under delegated authority.

11. Planning Matters

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Receive and circulate planning applications.
- Submit agreed Council comments.
- Seek extensions to consultation deadlines.

Where a statutory consultation deadline falls before the next available Council meeting, the Clerk may consult Members by electronic means and submit comments reflecting the majority view expressed by Members responding within the consultation period. Such comments shall be reported to the next Council meeting. The Clerk shall not determine Council planning policy.

12. Legal and Regulatory Matters

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Obtain legal, professional or technical advice within approved budgets.
- Make routine applications and submissions on behalf of the Council.
- Manage complaints in accordance with Council policy.
- Respond to Freedom of Information requests.
- Respond to Subject Access Requests.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR requirements.
- Manage insurance claims.

13. Urgent Matters Between Meetings

When an issue arises that:

- Cannot reasonably wait until the next scheduled meeting; and
- Requires an immediate decision;

the Clerk may act after consultation with:

- The Chair, or Chair of relevant committee; and
- The Vice-Chair where practicable; and
- Full Council via email if time allows.

Examples include:

- Health and safety matters.
- Emergency repairs.
- Legal deadlines.
- Business continuity issues.
- Reputational risks requiring an immediate response.

A written record shall be reported to the next Council meeting.

14. Emergencies and Business Continuity

In an emergency affecting Council operations, Council property or public safety, the Clerk is authorised to take all reasonable actions necessary to safeguard:

- Staff;
- Members;
- Residents;
- Council assets; and
- Essential services.

The Chair shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

All actions taken shall be reported to Council.

15. Representation

The Clerk is authorised to:

- Represent the Council at meetings with:
    - Cambridgeshire County Council;
    - South Cambridgeshire District Council;
    - Local government bodies;
    - Contractors;
    - Professional advisers; and
    - Community organisations.

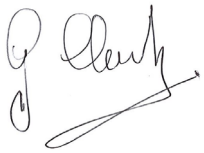
The Clerk may make factual statements on behalf of the Council but may not create new policy positions without Council approval.

16. Review

This Scheme of Delegation shall be reviewed annually by Melbourn Parish Council and amended as required to reflect legislative, organisational and operational changes.

Document Approval:

(Chair to Melbourn Parish Council)



Date of Parish Council meeting: 29 July 2026

Review Policy: Annually