

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Minutes of a Governance & Management Advisory Group (GAMAG) Meeting held on Thursday 1st October 2026 at 7.15pm in the Furminger Room, at the Community Hall, St Mary's Road, Market Lavington

Present:

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

Officers: Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO

Public: No members of the public.

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

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

G&M-047-011026	Election of Chair
Continuing on the previous agreement to have a rotational Chair for this group for the 2026-27 council year, Cllr Fraser chaired the meeting.	
G&M-048-011026	Attendance and Apologies for Absence
Attendance and apologies were noted as follows: Absent with apology – Cllrs Fred Davis; Ian MacQueen; Laura Turner-Scott. Absent without apology – Cllr Peter Joly. Cllr Suzanne Morrison has temporarily stepped back from councillor duties due to family commitments and so has a blanket apology for this period (minute 26/27-107-FC1509 refers).	
G&M-049-011026	Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest or potential conflicts of interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda were raised.	
G&M-050-011026	Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes)
As there were not any members of the public present, the meeting was not adjourned.	
G&M-051-011026	Notes from the Last Meeting
The minutes of the GAMAG meeting held on 30 th June 2026 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted they had already been accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting at the Full Council meeting on 15 th September 2026. However, a typographical error had since been noted, under minute G&M-042-300626(c) reference to the Standing Orders, which listed 'Highways' as a Standing Committee. It was noted that Highways is not a stand-alone Committee but included within the 'HRAF' Committee. Agreed Actions: The Clerk to delete the text 'Highways' accordingly.	
G&M-052-011026	Community Emergency Plan and Procedures
The Clerk reported that Cllrs Stevens and Quigley and the Clerk had recently attended an emergency planning briefing. The Council's plan was last updated in November 2025, mainly to update contact names. Cllr Stevens reported on her meeting with the Chairs of West Lavington and Easterton Parish Councils (notes to be circulated to Council by the Clerk):	

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- Easterton's plan is around 10 years old; some elements have been updated, and a full review is wanted.
- West Lavington's plan (2023) is considered more cohesive. It uses a short core plan plus separate **Community Action Cards** for each type of emergency.
- The Chair of West Lavington PC offered the use of its format.
- Major emergencies such as flooding or wildfire are likely to affect all three parishes, so aligned plans would be beneficial.

Members agreed the West Lavington format was clearer and easier to use. Existing Market Lavington content, including flood maps, is transferable.

Cllr Quigley suggested that, in future, the three parishes could consider a joint emergency committee and a main rest centre, given the difficulty of recruiting volunteers. Cllr Stevens will raise this at the next joint Chairs' meeting.

Cllr Poole noted that the Neighbourhood Plan may include water volume management measures that could benefit all three parishes. Cllr Quigley suggested he contact Easterton's flood management lead.

Agreed Actions:

1. The Community Emergency Plan to be redrafted in the West Lavington format (core plan plus Community Action Cards), using Market Lavington's existing information.
2. The redraft to address the matters listed on the agenda: out-of-date contacts; role-based contacts and GDPR compliance; provision of cool spaces during extreme heat (e.g. St Mary's Church); accessibility; maintenance of emergency equipment such as generators; and designation of emergency hub(s), including the Community Hall.
3. Cllrs Quigley and Stevens to prepare the redraft, for consideration at a future meeting before referral to Full Council. The Clerk to assist in providing information and process review.

G&M-053-011026

Training

- a) **Clerk's update.** The Clerk has set up a training matrix recording all courses booked, free or paid, for both councillors and staff. It is located on Teams under Channel named 'General' and in a Shared folder named 'Training'.
- b) **Training matrix and the shared folder.** Course materials (slides, recordings) will be stored in the same folder so all members can benefit. Councillors should send materials to the Clerk to upload, so the matrix can be kept up to date.
- c) **Questions and shared learning from those who attended training.** None raised.
- d) **Upcoming courses:**
 - Clerk: playground inspection course, October 2026.
 - Clerk and Cllr Fraser: booked onto a session about Community Engagement Surveys, especially for elderly residents.
 - Cllr Macqueen: Neighbourhood Plan session, 16th December 2026. The Clerk will ask whether it can be undertaken at the Old School so other councillors (e.g. Cllrs Quigley and Poole) can attend.

The Clerk advised that the playground inspection course offers an optional exam (approx. £150) giving full qualification. This would not replace the annual independent inspection, but would allow the Clerk to carry out minor repairs with insurance cover.

Agreed Actions: The Clerk to find out whether the exam can be booked on the day and what is involved to determine if it would benefit the Council. Any expenditure to be authorised in line with Financial Regulations.

G&M-054-011026

Policies and Governance Documents

a) Progress Update

The Clerk reported on work undertaken and progress made in relation to strategic documents and policies since the previous GAMAG meeting as follows:

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- Amendments agreed at the last meeting (including the Risk Register) are being actioned and finalised documents uploaded to the website; this is not yet complete.
- The partial update to Standing Orders has been adopted. The IT & Email Policy is complete.
- Outstanding: Equality & Diversity Policy; Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy (due for review, and to use role titles rather than names); Chairman's Charity Account Terms of Reference.

b) Review Priorities

The current review programme of the strategic documents and policies was discussed. It was reported that the Chairman's Charity Account currently holds approximately £1,400. Income to the account has previously been generated through village events such as the Vintage Meet; however, as this event no longer takes place and other village events are not fixed, the account has no regular source of income. Members noted that the future use of the account would require wider discussion.

Agreed Actions:

- Priority 1: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy. The Clerk to source template policies.
- Priority 2: Equality & Diversity Policy.
- Both to be uploaded to Teams for councillors' comments.
- Chairman's Charity Account Terms of Reference to be discussed in full at the next GAMAG meeting.

c) Policy Review

No documents were ready for detailed review. No recommendations are made to the October Full Council meeting.

d) New Policies

The following new policies and any associated draft documents were discussed.

- New Councillor Induction Process.** The Clerk had drafted a New Councillor Induction Policy, combining material she had previously used and that supplied by Cllr Fraser issued to her when she joined the Council. As it was only uploaded to Teams shortly before the meeting, councillors briefly reviewed it at the meeting. It was noted that it includes a checklist, a buddy system, a check-in from the Chair, although the Clerk noted it still required an explanation of committees and working groups. Members felt it should be an aid, not a requirement, as needs vary with experience. Suggestions for improvements included: encouraging attendance at Councillor Fundamentals training; a resource library (including NALC summary guides); Teams guidance with screenshots; and the email set-up guide.

Agreed Actions: Councillors to review the draft on Teams and send comments to the Clerk. The document to return to the next meeting for further consideration.

- Model Councillor/Officer Protocol.** Councillor views on this suggested NALC model document were mixed. It was felt that much of it repeats Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct. However, the sections on the Clerk's role, what may be delegated, and routing concerns about the Clerk via the Chair of the Staffing Committee (a point raised by Cllr Turner-Scott through the Clerk) were felt relevant.

Agreed Actions: Not to adopt the Protocol document in full. The Clerk to include its relevant sections in the Terms of Reference and Delegations document for final review before readoption.

- Community Engagement Policy.** Not uploaded. Deferred to a future meeting.

iv. Other policies/procedures raised:

- **NALC Governance Checklist:** The checklist had been circulated to members as pre-reading. It was noted that the Council already has almost all of the recommended

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documents in place, the one exception being a fixed calendar of meetings, as meeting dates are frequently rearranged.

Members went on to discuss the value of holding committee meetings. It was acknowledged that each committee meeting creates a significant amount of additional work for the Clerk, including the preparation of agendas, minutes and reports. However, members also recognised that committees provide an opportunity for items to be discussed in greater depth, which in turn provides potential for Full Council meetings to run more smoothly and efficiently.

Cllr Stevens suggested that the Council trial a schedule of fixed quarterly committee meetings for a period of one year. Cllr Fraser commented that, in her view, actions agreed at committee meetings should, wherever possible, be completed before a further meeting is held, as otherwise this leads to further delays.

- **Provisional Committee Meeting Dates:** Old School Committee, Thursday 29th October 2026 (subject to confirmation with Cllr Davis as Chair); HRAF Committee, Thursday 3rd December 2026 (venue to be confirmed). The Clerk to confirm both.
- **Register of Interests:** Cllr Quigley queried the current requirements. The Clerk confirmed the form has been simplified. Home addresses are not published unless a councillor gives written consent; the Clerk will provide the relevant updated form to all councillors.

G&M-055-011026

Other Governance & Management Matters

Cllr Stevens raised the Clerk's workload in maintaining the website and IT. The website is outdated, difficult to update and not fully accessible, which contributes to the reason that previously updated and agreed policies are slow to appear online. The Clerk reported:

- She had met with a new accessibility review provider online in August who had supplied a quote. The previous provider had not responded to chaser email contact from the Clerk.
- Specialist parish council website providers (e.g. Aubergine) offer packages, and some providers offer first-line IT support.
- Following decisions at the September Full Council meeting, the Clerk will be moving the Council's accounting data on to the new Scribe accounts system, which will take some considerable time.

Members noted that improving accessibility supports the Council's equality duties, and that a quote would be needed for budget-setting.

Agreed Actions:

The Clerk to circulate the quotation received for the website accessibility improvement works.

G&M-056-011026

Items for Next Agenda

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

- Website redesign: the Clerk to obtain quotations and invite provider/s (e.g. Aubergine) to present, remotely if needed.
- Chairman's Charity Account Terms of Reference.
- New Councillor Induction Policy: comments received.
- Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity Policies: comments received.

G&M-057-011026

Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes)

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

G&M-058-011026

Date and Time of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the GAMAG is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 1st December 2026 at 7.15pm at the Old School. The date of this meeting will be retained for now; the Clerk to review it alongside the HRAF Committee meeting date set for the same week.

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Also, that the next meeting of the Full Council would be held on Tuesday 20th October 2026 at 7.15pm at the Old School.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.16pm.

Signed..... Date.....

DRAFT