

Appleton Wiske Parish Council Policies and Procedures

Status

BP – Best practice

SR – Statutory Requirement

AR – Audit Requirement

CR – Contractual Requirement

For Appleton Wiske Parish Council, given its small size but need for compliance, the following policies and documents from the YLCA checklist should be prioritised to ensure we meet legal, financial, and governance standards. Other best practice policies (BP) can be added over time, but these should be the first priority for compliance.:

1. **Standing Orders (SR)** - Essential for outlining how meetings are run and decisions are made. This ensures all operations align with legal standards.
2. **Financial Regulations (SR)** - Crucial for managing finances and staying compliant with the law, particularly with regard to procurement and audit requirements.
3. **Code of Conduct (SR)** - All councils must adopt a Code of Conduct to guide councillor behaviour. It ensures ethical decision-making and governance.
4. **Risk Assessment (AR)** - Important to regularly assess risks within the parish and ensure adequate mitigation strategies, particularly for liability and health and safety compliance.
5. **Complaints Procedure (SR)** - Provides a framework for handling complaints from the public and ensures transparency and accountability.
6. **Transparency Code (SR for councils with under £25,000 turnover)** - Small councils like ours must comply with the Transparency Code, which involves publishing key documents and financial data.
7. **Publication Scheme (SR under the Freedom of Information Act 2000)** - Required to inform the public of what information is accessible and how they can obtain it.
8. **Insurance Register (BP)** - Maintaining a clear list of insurable interests ensures you're protected against potential risks.
9. **Members' Registers of Interest (SR)** - Essential for transparency and avoiding conflicts of interest, ensuring compliance with the Localism Act 2011.
10. **Declarations of Acceptance of Office (SR)** - Required for councillors to formally commit to their duties.

For additional policies to enhance governance and best practices, here are some useful additions for Appleton Wiske Parish Council, which can help improve transparency, operational efficiency, and risk management:

1. **Co-option Policy (BP)** - Useful for clearly defining the process of appointing new councillors when vacancies arise outside of elections.
2. **Data Protection Policy (BP)** - Although compliance with GDPR is mandatory, this policy would outline how the council handles personal data, ensuring security and compliance with data protection laws.
3. **Complaints Procedure (BP)** - An example model policy for handling complaints efficiently, even beyond the legal requirements.
4. **Delegated Authority Policy (BP)** - Having a scheme of delegation for officers and committees can streamline decision-making, especially if the clerk or committees handle routine tasks.
5. **Grievance and Disciplinary Policies (BP)** - Good for establishing a formal structure for handling employee issues. This would prevent potential internal conflicts and provide clarity on procedures.
6. **Social Media and Website Management Policies (BP)** - These would regulate how our council engages with the public online, ensuring consistency and protecting our council's image.
7. **Training Statement of Intent (BP)** - This outlines our commitment to providing ongoing training for councillors and staff, ensuring that everyone is up-to-date with their roles and responsibilities.
8. **Reserves Policy (BP)** - It's good practice to have a policy that clarifies how the council manages its financial reserves for future projects or emergencies.
9. **Asset Register (AR)** - Although an audit requirement, a clear asset register helps track council-owned property and can aid in financial planning.
10. **Health & Safety Policy (SR for larger councils, BP for smaller ones)** - Even though our council doesn't employ many staff, this policy can cover issues like lone working, especially for volunteers or staff working alone in community spaces.
11. **Grant Giving Policy (BP)** - This outlines how our council will manage and distribute any grants to the community, ensuring transparency in decision-making.
12. **Equal Opportunities Policy (BP)** - While not legally required for very small councils, having a policy to ensure equal treatment of councillors, staff, and volunteers is always a good practice.