

Acceptance of Gifts, Donations, and Community Contributions Policy

(Local Government Act 1972)

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the framework under which Worplesdon Parish Council (“the Council”) may accept gifts, donations, bequests and contributions made for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish.

The Council welcomes community generosity and recognises that such contributions can enhance local services, facilities and community wellbeing. However, as a statutory public authority funded by taxation, the Council must ensure that all such arrangements are lawful, transparent and protect public funds and public assets.

This policy ensures:

- legal compliance;
- fairness and consistency;
- protection of the Council’s independence and reputation; and
- protection of future councils from unintended obligations.

2. Legal Powers

The Council may accept gifts of money, land or property for the benefit of the parish under **section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972**.

The Council may acknowledge contributions by publishing information about its activities and services under **section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972**.

Financial support provided *by the Council* toward community activities is governed separately by the Council’s grant-giving arrangements and relevant statutory powers and is not covered by this policy.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Gift / Donation / Contribution

A voluntary transfer of money, goods, land, services or other property to the Council for community benefit, for which no commercial return or advertising benefit is provided.

Bequest

A gift left to the Council in a will.

Restricted Gift

A gift where the donor requests it be used for a specific purpose.

Memorial Item

An item provided in memory of an individual (e.g. benches, trees, plaques, planters, or similar).

This policy does **not** apply to commercial contracts, procurement arrangements, or advertising.

4. General Principles

4.1 The Council may accept gifts only where they clearly benefit the inhabitants of the parish.

4.2 All gifts are accepted at the Council's discretion. The Council reserves the right to decline any gift.

4.3 In accordance with s142 of the LGA, the Council will not enter into sponsorship, advertising or promotional agreements.

4.4 Acceptance of a gift shall not:

- influence Council decision-making;
- create preferential treatment;
- bind the Council to future expenditure without explicit approval; or
- compromise the Council's impartiality.

4.5 Acceptance of a gift does not constitute endorsement of the donor, their business, services or opinions.

5. Conditions and Restrictions

5.1 The Council will not normally accept gifts subject to conditions.

5.2 The Council may accept a restricted gift only where:

- the purpose is lawful;
- the Council can reasonably comply; and
- no ongoing or disproportionate financial liability arises.

5.3 The Council will not accept gifts that:

- impose perpetual maintenance obligations;
- restrict the lawful use of Council land;
- conflict with Council policies or values;
- place the Council in legal or financial risk.

5.4 The Council reserves the right to relocate, remove, replace or dispose of any donated item when it reaches the end of its useful life, becomes unsafe, or when required for land management purposes.

6. Memorial Benches, Trees and Similar Items

6.1 Memorial items may be permitted subject to location approval by the Council.

6.2 A contribution toward purchase and installation may be required.

6.3 The Council retains full ownership of all memorial items.

6.4 The Council does not guarantee retention in perpetuity.

6.5 Memorial items will normally be retained for an approximate period of 10 years (or the reasonable lifespan of the item), after which the Council may remove, replace or relocate it without liability.

6.6 The Council is not responsible for loss, damage, vandalism, theft or deterioration.

7. Financial Donations

7.1 Monetary donations may be accepted toward community facilities, events, or improvements.

7.2 Donations may be:

- general (at Council discretion), or
- restricted (for a stated project).

7.3 Restricted donations may be returned if the specified project cannot proceed.

7.4 Donations do not entitle the donor to:

- influence Council decisions;
- priority use of facilities; or
- advertising rights.

8. Acknowledgement of Contributions

8.1 The Council may acknowledge donors publicly.

8.2 Acknowledgement may include:

- a small plaque;
- a programme note;
- website acknowledgement; or
- a letter of thanks.

8.3 Any acknowledgement is provided solely as information to residents and shall not constitute advertising or endorsement.

The Council will not display logos, promotional slogans, or marketing material in return for contributions.

9. Procedure for Acceptance

9.1 All proposed gifts shall be reported to the Clerk.

9.2 Acceptance shall be approved as follows:

- up to £500 (or equivalent value): relevant Committee or Clerk under delegated authority

- over £500: Full Council

9.3 The Clerk shall record accepted gifts in:

- the asset register (where applicable)
- accounting records
- Council minutes

9.4 Where appropriate, the Council may require a written agreement.

10. Accounting and Ownership

10.1 All accepted items become the property of Worplesdon Parish Council.

10.2 Gifts of land shall be subject to legal transfer into Council ownership.

10.3 Financial gifts will be recorded in accordance with proper accounting practices and audit requirements.

11. Conflicts of Interest

Councillors and officers with a personal interest in any proposed donation shall not participate in its consideration.

12. Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

Adopted by Worplesdon Parish Council:

Date: _____

Review date: _____