



# Ringshall Parish Council

## Three Year Business Plan

V1.0

## Version Control

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## **What is a Parish Council Business Plan**

The Parish Council Business Plan sets the Parish Council's vision for the parish, its **purpose, values, objectives and key priorities** for the next three years.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Ringshall's parishioners a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next three years. The Business Plan is a live document that Council will review annually, use to drive the budget process, plan activities for the coming year and enable the Parish Council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

### **Why has the Parish Council decided to produce a Business Plan**

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way, to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making. We have based the Plan on our understanding of our community's needs gathered from our day-to-day involvement with residents and other key organisations within Ringshall Parish.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and also clarify what it doesn't do; in other words to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) or Suffolk County Council (SCC).

The Business Plan is a statement of intent, however, Ringshall Parish Council may have to make decisions contrary to our stated commitments if events such as budget constraints, new legislation or changes in our policies make that necessary. Any changes will, however, be reflected in an updated plan. It will be a 'live' document, which the Parish Council will update regularly, enabling it to track, and monitor its progress against the key priorities. Because the Business Plan will be publicly available, Ringshall parishioners will also be able to monitor progress.

## **The Parish Council**

### **Overview**

Ringshall Parish Council is the first and local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the Ringshall Village & outlying areas (Parish) representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups within the community.

Mid Suffolk District Council (SHDC) is the second tier and is responsible for services including housing and environmental services. MSDC is also responsible for strategic planning policies for all development (including housing and employment sites) via its Local Plan.

Finally, Suffolk County Council's (SCC) responsibilities include highways, relating to both roads and footways (pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

Residents elect seven Parish Councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chairman and, optionally, a Vice-Chairman annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. The Council reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting held in May. Councillors are unpaid. Councillors commit their time to improving Ringshall Parish and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business. Elections are held every four years, they were last held in May 2019. The next election will be in May 2023.

The Parish Council owns property (village hall, bus stop) but no land in the Parish. The Council holds these assets on behalf of the community and are responsible for maintaining their value. The full Council meets generally on the last Tuesday every other month in the village hall. All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for members of the public to address the Council.

The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, these lay down the rules by which it operates and conducts its business. The Council also expect Parish Councillors to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct. Any committees and working groups work to terms of reference agreed by the Council.

### **The Council Staff and Management**

The Council currently employs one part-time administration employee - the Clerk to the Council. The Clerk administers the Council business and must carry out all the functions required by law. The Clerk is the Parish Council's "Proper Officer" and only the Clerk can sign official documents on behalf of Council. The Clerk is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Council will make use of contractors for maintenance tasks.

### **Financial Information**

#### **Income**

The residents of Ringshall, through the precept, fund the Parish Council. The precept is the local tax levied by the Parish Council that MSDC collects on our behalf as part of the Council Tax bill.

In this document we tell you what you get for your money and you can decide whether or not it represents good value.

#### **Expenditure**

The main items of expenditure are:

- Office Administration, salaries, insurance, contractors and on-going expenditure (e.g. grants and donations, maintenance etc.)
- One-off projects (e.g. play areas, village improvements, open spaces projects, major repairs, etc. where monies are often held in earmarked reserves)

Council will fully allocate the budget for each accounting year in the January of the previous accounting year.

Council's unallocated reserve is money the Council holds in case there is a major problem that affects the Council's business. This could be any disaster that requires major emergency funding.

The Council also has allocated reserves. We put this money aside to cover contingencies like staff turnover, equipment failure (street lighting etc.), and larger projects.

The Parish Council has the following ongoing responsibilities:

- Ownership and maintenance of the bus shelter
- Ownership and maintenance of the street lighting
- The provision of small community grants
- Submitting comments on all planning applications and change of use applications in the parish as a statutory consultee of the local planning authority (MSDC)
- The provision of litter and dog fouling bins and their emptying

The Council looks to reflect the views of the community by liaising with other public bodies and commenting on key strategic issues such as housing, planning, highways, social services and education.

Administrating parish council business, managing council finances, project managing, keeping residents informed of decisions and proposals that may affect them and dealing with enquiries is a core function that promotes the efficient and effective running of the council.

## **Parish Council Objectives**

Ringshall Parish Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council, to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure the sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The Parish Council aims to:

- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues
- Improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training
- Ensure we give Councillors the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy
- Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for its staff

- Continuously promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently
- Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents

To this end council has proposed the following focus for its actions:

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Implication</b>
<b>Administering the Council</b>		
To maintain effective operation control	To continue operating to our Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and all other relevant policies	Periodic review of all policies. Completion and submission of AGAR form Periodic review of adherence to policies.
	To make use of a suitably qualified Internal Auditor	Agree on Internal Auditor in January/March meeting
	To rectify Internal Audit noted failings	Rectification action plan to be approved, and monitored
Staff appraisals	To undertake annual appraisal of all employees during March of each year	To be added to Standing Orders as a standing item for each March agenda
Review of the business plan	Annually review business plan each January	Draft to be presented to council in November for approval in January
Provide on going training for Staff	Review training needs as part of the annual appraisal	Training budget allocation required each year, this will need to be estimated as budget set before appraisal.
Provide training for new Councillors	Encourage all new councillors to attend the SALC New Councillor within 6 months of becoming members	Training budget allocated in general reserves

Assets - Office	Maintain the proficiency of the office equipment.	Set aside reserves to cover unexpected end of life of office equipment.  Plan for replacement office equipment.
<b>Environment</b>		
To contribute to the cleanliness of verges and pathways	Organise an annual litter pick	Standing Orders to include a stipulated litter pick item for the January meeting.  Litter pick risk assessment document required.  Suitable litter picking and safety kit is required.
	To supply and maintain dog litter bins	Clerk to periodically inspect bins, and check that bins are emptied as per contract with MDSC  Reserves to be allocated to bin maintenance/replacement.
	To supply and maintain litter bins	Clerk to periodically inspect bins, and check that bins are emptied as per contract with MDSC  Reserves to be allocated to bin maintenance/replacement.
	To continue to fund the emptying of the litter and dog bins	Budget line to be added to every budget to fund this.
	To review the effectiveness of the currently provided bins	One review required during the 3 year period of this plan.
Assets - Non-Office	All Council assets to be suitably maintained.	Reserves to be allocated to non regular maintenance.  Budget lines to be added for all regular maintenance.  Clerk to prepare maintenance schedule.
Protection of Parish Environment	Work with MDSC and RVHMC to	Support promotion of recycling



	promote more recycling	point at the Village Hall Xmas tree recycling
Traffic	Support the Speedwatch team. Provide and monitor a SID.	Additional hours required by Clerk to add monitoring to work load.
	To report potholes to highways as required.	Standing agenda item added to each ordinary meeting to receives reports on road maintenance issues.
	Provide grit and grit bins	Two grit bins already in place. Clerk to inspect and monitor grit bins, instigating refills from existing grit stocks held by the Council. Reorder more grit when required.
Planning	Continue to review all planning applications within the Parish, and comment in the best interests of the parish.	Clerk to make sure Council can consider all applications within the given timescales.
<b>Community</b>		
Local groups	Support local groups and organisations	Budget line required to be set to facilitate this
Children's activities	Engage external groups to provide one off activity days/sessions for children	Budget line required to facilitate this.
Mother and Toddler group	Gauge interest for such a group, and help set one up if required. Provide supportive funding.	Budget line required for ongoing support.
RVHMC	As Custodian Trustee continue working with the RVHMC to provide recreation facilities for the parish	Appoint Councillor to the RVHMC committee.
Communication	Promote communication between the Council and the Parish.	Investigate usage of Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms.

		Consider regular update articles in the 4 Parishes Magazine.
	Keep website up to date.	Compliance with the Transparency Code will be maintained.
	Use website to promote all village activities	Work with the 4 Parishes Magazine to publish events sent to them.
<b>Emergency or other services</b>		
Defibrillator	Maintain the defibrillator, and report monthly to the relevant status tracking service. Buy new pads as required. Buy new battery as required.	Budget to be set in the year the pads become out of date. Reserves to be set for battery replacement. Reserves to be set for pad replacement in case of usage.
Street lighting	Continue to provide funding for the street lights, both for maintenance and electricity. Replace with LED units when older units fail	Reserves to be set for light unit replacement.
Emergency Plan	Support the production and maintenance of a Parish Emergency Plan	Create a working party to manage the plan.