

ITEM 24

Resolution - The Parish Council's standing orders and statutory legislation does not permit the late submission of any supplementary supporting documents to be considered at a parish council meetings. Nevertheless, it is a regular occurrence for supplemental supporting documentations to be issued by the Parish Clerk to members immediately before or during a meeting (including members introducing their own documents at meetings). Late submission of documents - A Council cannot add supplementary supporting documents to the summons for a meeting (within the three-clear-day window). As statutory legislation requires all supplementary documents to be available for public inspection immediately from the time the summons are published.

I move that the Parish Council immediately introduces a Late Submission Policy to ensure democratic accountability and transparency.

1. This policy will ensure the parish council compliance with the three-clear-day window by immediately stopping the late submission of any supplementary supporting documentation for consideration at a parish council meeting.
2. The Parish Council will seek legal advice from the CDALC and SLCC to establish whether it would be lawful for it to adopt an exceptional handling provision to the Late Submission Policy that would allow in limited exceptional circumstances the parish clerk to make late submissions of supplementary supporting documentation for an item already on the summons that makes specific reference to the reason under the legal definition of exception circumstances for the omission of associated documentation. In law, "exceptional circumstances" are unusual, unforeseen events that fall outside the scope of a general rule and can justify a deviation from standard procedure.

Supplementary Information:

Councils are under a legal obligation to ensure members and the public are provided with the summons and all relevant background papers before any council meeting. This requirement is primarily governed by the Local Government Act 1972 and related access to information legislation. Summons specifying the business - Three clear days before a council meeting, notice of its date, time and venue must be posted in a conspicuous place in the parish (paragraph 10(2)(a) of schedule 12 to the 1972 Act). "Clear days" does not include the day on which notice was issued and the day of the meeting. A council can adopt standing orders to regulate such matters (paragraph 42 of schedule 12 to the 1972 Act) which must be consistent with statutory legislation.

At the Parish Council Meeting held 20 November 2025 members were provided with the following supplementary support documentation by email less than 24 hours before the meeting was to take place, and these documents were not available for public inspection:

1. 19th November 2025 Financial Report received 19:27 hrs
2. 19th November 2025 Durham Community News November 2025 received 19:28 hrs
3. 19th November 2025 Replacement Financial Report received 21:08 hrs

4. Screenshot below taken 20th November at 04:39 hrs of the Parish Council's website shows this information was not provided to the public.

Information Commissioner's guidance:

All email communications between a council and its members are generally accessible under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), provided the information relates to council business. The FOIA covers all **recorded information held by a public authority**, which includes emails, regardless of whether they are on official or private email accounts, as long as they concern official council business.

November 2025

- [November 2025 Agenda](#)
- [Minutes Awaited](#)

Supporting Documents

- [Item 3 A – Co-option Information](#)
- [Item 9 DCC Planning Applications](#)
- [Item 11 B Jubilee Hall request](#)
- [Item 14 A Memorial Testing](#)
- [Item 14 B Cemetery – Lime Tree maintenance](#)
- [Item 15 Potential Additional Equipment – School Avenue Park](#)
- [Item 16 Motion – Annual Parish Meetings](#)
 - [Item 16 Supp Doc LTN6 Meetings of Parish Meetings revised Sept14](#)
 - [Item 16 Supp Doc NALC Meetings of parish meetings](#)
 - [Item 16 Supp Doc SLCC- Guidance-on-Annual-Parish-Meeting-England-Updated- 21.07.17](#)
 - [Item 16 Supp Doc The-Annual- Parish-Meeting-description](#)
- [Item 17 Motion – Asset Register Update](#)