

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL



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**Business Plan
2025 - 2028**

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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 five years. The aim of the Business Plan is to give Gislingham's parishioners' a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. The Parish Council aims to promote the well-being and improve the quality of life of the residents of the Parish of Gislingham.

It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next three years. The Business Plan is a live document and will be reviewed annually, used to develop budgets, plan activities for the coming years and enable the Parish Council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

To ensure this Business Plan is consistent with our residents and businesses wishes, we will consult on its contents through as many channels as possible including our website, key contacts and organisations within the Parish.

The Parish Council

Overview.

There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities. West Suffolk County Council is a tier one authority with Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council being the tier two authority. Gislingham Parish Council is the local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the Parish, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups within the community.

Residents elect Parish Councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chair and Vice Chair annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. Councillors can opt to receive an allowance. They commit their time to improving the Parish and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business.

The last elections for Gislingham Parish Council were held in May 2023 with the next elections in May 2026

The full Council meets monthly on the third Monday at Gislingham Village Centre. All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside at each meeting for members of the public to address Council.

The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These Governing Instruments provide a framework by which we operate and conduct our business.

The Parish of Gislingham has 1009 registered electors.

Statutory Duties and Powers.

Apart from a number of requirements associated with the proper conduct of its affairs, and the proper management of its finances (for example the duty to appoint an auditor) there are few Statutory Duties imposed on a Parish Council. However, the Council has a number of powers it can use for the benefit of the local community.

Governance

Gislingham Parish Council has six parish councillors elected to represent the interests of the whole community, and where possible to find solutions to local problems and influence the decisions that affect the Parish.

The Council funds the attendance of councillors on training courses to increase their effectiveness and to ensure they are kept up to date with best practice.

Finance

The Budget

The Parish Council aims to conduct its activities to provide for the efficient and prudent use of our resources. Each year the Council sets a budget for its expenditure in the next financial year. It uses this budget to determine how much money it needs to raise from the precept, if possible meeting some expenditure by grant funding

The Precept

The precept is the money a parish council raises in order to carry out its duties and functions for the year. This is collected by Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council which includes it as an item in their local Council Tax bill sent to every household each year.

Other Funding Sources

The Council will take advantage of other sources of funding on an opportunity basis and where appropriate by submitting project proposals as a Community Highways Application or for Chichester District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and by identifying projects which it can fund using its share of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Employees

The Council has one part-time employee, the Parish Clerk, who is in law the 'Proper Officer' of the Council and also fulfils the role of Responsible Financial Officer.

Communications and Consultation

The Parish Council aims to maintain effective communications between Councillors and all members of the local community. To do this we make use of several resources to ensure that information is accessible to the public:

Public Meetings

All the Parish Council's scheduled meetings and meetings of its committees are held in public, and time is set aside before each meeting for members of the public to speak on matters on the agenda. We also hold an Annual Meeting of Electors where we make an annual report and review our activities over the previous year. In addition we will hold special meetings from time to time if there is a contentious topic such as a significant planning matter which engenders public debate.

Facebook

The Council maintains a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gislinghamparishcouncilnewpage>

Website

The Council maintains a website at: <https://gislinghamparishcouncil.com/> where it publishes the agenda and minutes of all meetings, and contact details of Parish, District and County Councillors and the Clerk. We also use the website to publish details of its procurement of goods and services, Councillors' registers of interests and other such information which it is legally obliged to make available. The website also hosts information about facilities available to residents and provides links to associated websites which provide community information. We will ensure our website is maintained in accordance with best practice.

Noticeboards

The Parish Council maintains a notice board at the local shop.

Leisure and the Community

The Parish Council provides a number of facilities and supports a number of events for the use and enjoyment of the local community:

The Playing Field

The playing field is owned and managed by a separate and independent charitable trust. The Parish Council makes a financial contribution as it leases some of the land. The Council provides the provision of equipment sited on the playing field such as the apparatus in the children's play area and to maintain the safe surfaces in the play area.

Other Events

From time to time the Parish Council will organise other events such as gatherings or street parties to celebrate national events such as the Queen's Jubilee, 80th VE Day Celebration and Get togethers to improve or benefit the local.

Environment and Planning

The Parish Council will work towards maintaining and enhancing the local environment:

Litter

We are responsible for arranging and funding the provision of a number of local bins for the collection of waste from the Village and in various sites in the parish for the collection of dog waste. Periodically we organise Litter Pick with volunteers to clear waste from the roads and paths in the parish.

Drainage

We will monitor the local arrangements for disposal of surface water, liaising with local landowners and ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities to keep ditches in good condition. We will liaise with Suffolk County Council Highways Department to make sure they are aware of the requirement to clear the culverts under roads for which they are responsible.

Planning

Monitoring and responding to planning applications is one of the most significant ways in which we can seek to influence our local environment. The Parish Council is not the planning authority for the area, and has no power to decide on applications, for which the authority in most cases is the District Council. However, we take care to be aware of all planning applications in the parish and those in neighbouring parishes which may affect local residents.

All planning applications are considered by the Parish Council's Planning Committee, which may comment or object to an application to reflect the interests of the residents of the parish. In cases where the parish makes a formal objection to a Full Planning Application, this will mean that the District Council's planning officers cannot approve the application using their delegated authority and must bring the application to the District Planning.

Neighbourhood Plan

We recognise that a Neighbourhood Plan can be a key component in exercising influence over proposed developments in the Parish. We will work with local residents to form a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, and develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish.

Community Facilities

Schools

Within the Parish there we have a Gislingham Primary School and Playgroup which acts as a feeder to the primary school.

Get Together's

We held a Winter Get together in January this year and one planned for April we are hoping to carry these out on quarterly basis at the Village Hall for all residents of pensionable age or anyone wanting a bit of company.

Transport, Access and Highways

The Parish Council recognises that transport is crucial to a rural parish and will work towards maintaining and improving facilities and infrastructure. In doing so we are conscious of the need to maintain a safe environment for pedestrians and riders as well as other road users, and we will strive to improve pedestrian safety.

Public Transport

The Council recognises that public transport are key components of environmentally friendly travel. The parish benefits from a regular bus services, Monday Wednesdays and Fridays but are looking at additional service on Thursdays and Fridays.

Footpaths

The parish is well-provided with public footpaths and bridleways. Our footpath warden works closely with us and Suffolk County Council to ensure these are well-signposted, and with local landowners to make sure they are kept passable. We will also encourage local landowners to maintain permissive paths where these provide useful access.

Traffic and Speeding

The Parish Council has two Speed Indicator Devices and a third is due to be installed in the near future, we also have a Community Speed watch (CSW) which is a national initiative where active members of local communities join with the support of the Police to monitor speeds of vehicles using speed detection devices

DATE	ITEM	
January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and approve Handling of DBS Policy Consider and approve Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy Consider and approve Community Engagement Policy Consider and approve Cookies Policy Consider and approve Parish Publication Consider and approve Complaints Policy Submit Precept to MSDC Charity Meadow Play Equipment Annual Inspection Review training needs 	
February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint Internal Auditor for financial year 2024/25 Consider & Approve CIL Community Infrastructure Levy Grants Application Policy Consider and approve Standing Orders Health & Safety Policy Review Review training needs 	
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider & Approve Business Plan 2025/26 Ask for nominations for Watson Bowl Consider and approve Grant/Donation requests Consider and approve Audit Plan Finalise arrangements for Spring Get Together Review training needs 	
April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Year Return VAT Payroll Year End and issue P60s Finalise arrangements for Annual Village Meeting Finalise arrangements for Annual Parish Council Meeting Debate Watson Bowl Prepare for Internal and External Audit 2024/25 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review training needs 	
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Annual Village Meeting • Annual Parish Council Meeting (Elect Chair) • Award Watson Bowl & Volunteer of the Year • Consider and approve Internal Audit • Ensure 2023/24 external Audit Recommendations carried out on AGAR for 2024/25 • Consider and approve Workplace Pension Scheme • Consider and approve Data Protection Policy • Consider and approve Risk Assessment & Management Policy • Consider and approve Privacy Policy • Forward invoice to GAGA Allotment for Rent • Review training needs 	
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit completed AGAR part 1 and 2 • Display notice of Audit • Publish Statement of Variances • Consider and approve Internet Banking Policy • Consider and approve Reserves Policy • Consider and approve Safeguarding Policy • Consider and approve CCTV • Organise litter pick • Review training needs 	
July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and approve to Conduct Quarterly Audit of Accounts • Consider and approve Laptop & Cell (Mobile) Phone Usage Policy • Consider and approve Sickness & Absence Policy • Consider and approve Travel & Expenses Policy • Consider and approve Training Policy • Consider and approve Staff Appraisal Policy • Review training needs 	
August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety Policy Review • Consider and approve Grant/Donation Policy • Annual Staff Review (Clerk/RFO) • Review training needs 	
September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate • Publish Notice of Conclusion of Audit • Consider and approve Disciplinary Rules • Consider and approve Disciplinary Policy • Consider and approve Grievance Procedure • Consider and approve Insurance Renewal • Consider and approve Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy • Consider and approve Grant/Donation requests • Review Training needs 	
October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and approve the purchase of Wreath for Remembrance Day • Arrangements for Remembrance Day • Consider and approve quarterly Audit of Accounts • Review Training needs 	
November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and approve the Budget • Consider and approve Health & Safety Policy • Litter pick • Review training needs 	
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and approve Precept for 2026/27 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review training needs 	
January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and dispose of records or archive accordingly • Consider and approve Business Plan 2026 • Submit Precept to MSDC • Consider and approve quarterly Audit of Accounts • Charity Meadow Play Equipment Annual Inspection • Review training needs 	
February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Internal Auditor for financial year 2025/26 • Review training needs 	
March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and approve arrangements for Annual Village Meeting • Consider arrangements for Election in May • Consider and approve Grant/Donation requests • Consider and approve Audit Plan • Ask for nominations for Watson Bowl • Organise Litter Pick • Review training needs 	
April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Year Return VAT • Debate Watson Bowl • Payroll Year End and issue P60s • Finalise arrangements for Annual Village Meeting • Prepare for Internal and External Audit 2025/26 • Review training needs 	
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Adopted by Full Council

Signed *C Tranter* Chair

Approved by Gislingham Parish Council on 17th March 2025

Date of next review March 2026 or as and when required.