

BEST PRACTICE AGREEMENT 2022

**Argyll and Bute Council
Argyll and Bute Community Councils**

**Argyll and Bute Council Commitment
Community Council Commitment
Code of Guidance for Communications
Financial Guidelines
Code of Conduct for Community Councillors**

Best Practice Agreement

The work of community councils across Argyll and Bute varies from community council to community council . as does their method of operation and the ways in which they engage with a range of public and other community bodies. It should not be forgotten however that that main purpose of a community council is to represent the views of the community which it represents.

This Best Practice Agreement outlines the commitments required from both Argyll and Bute Council and community councils to build strong relationships and operate effectively together to advance the interest of Argyll and Bute communities. It also incorporates a Code of Communication, Financial Guidelines, and Code of Conduct for community councillors.

Argyll and Bute Council will keep the responsibilities and procedures laid down in this Code of Practice under regular review, and where it appears necessary or desirable to make any amendments, will formally consult community councils on such proposals to review.

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Argyll and Bute Council Commitment

Community Engagement

1. Argyll and Bute Council recognises that community councils have made, and

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www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

18. Argyll and Bute Council will

Community Council Commitment

Community Engagement

1. Community councils have a statutory right to ascertain, co-ordinate and express the views of the communities to Argyll and Bute Council and other public bodies. Community councils should seek to establish close, constructive relationships with Argyll and Bute councillors, council staff and other bodies as appropriate.
2. In ascertaining views, community councils should ensure there is wide consultation with the community and they should encourage local interest and participation in community debate. It is recognised that the more robust community councils can be in evidencing good community engagement, the more weight will be attributed to their view. Primary accountability is to the electorate (or those under 16 who are resident within the catchment area of a

Elections

10. Community councils should encourage contested community council elections or by-elections, promoting electoral participation,

20. Community councils may wish to make a mileage payment to its members in respect of attendance at such training sessions and, where large geographic areas are covered, the mileage associated with attending meetings. Such arrangements should be agreed by the community council who will put in place an appropriate procedure for claiming such monies and also agree a rate of payment. There will be no additional payment from the council.
21. Community councils shall encourage local development by promoting funding of community efforts. They may set up and raise specific funds for this purpose.

Communications

22. The advice on communications is contained within 6.1 of Guidance for communications with the Council. Community councils will respect the advice contained within this.
23. Community councils should ensure that an up-to-date contact list of all members, elected and co-opted, is maintained and changes notified to the Community Council Liaison Officer.

Good Practice Agreement

Code of Guidance for Communications with the Council

This is the Code of Guidance for Communications between Argyll and Bute Council and community councils referred to in the Best Practice Agreement.

Communications between such groups should follow the guidance below:

1. Enquiries

1.1 Enquiries are classified as follows:

Minor defects or service requests e.g. repairs required to street lights, road surfaces, uplift of rubbish, damaged play equipment, etc.

Such enquiries can be made via the Council website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk, which is a 24 hour service, or within office hours by calling the appropriate number from the list below:

- Council Tax Enquiries: 01546 605511/ctax1@argyll-bute.gov.uk
- Benefit Enquiries: 01546 605512
- Roads & Lighting, car parking fines and faults, Waste Collection, Flytipping, abandoned vehicles, Dog Fouling, pest control: 01546 605514 or by emailing roadsandinfrastructure@argyll-bute.gov.uk
- Complaints and Feedback: 01546 605516
- Social Care & Blue Badges: 01546 605517
- Planning and Building Control Services: 01546 605518 or planning.maki@argyll-bute.gov.uk, planning.olandi@argyll-bute.gov.uk, planning.bandc@argyll-bute.gov.uk, planning.handi@argyll-bute.gov.uk
- Regulatory Services: 01546 605519
- Book a pitch, room or minibus . 01546 605520
- Homelessness: 01546 555936
- Non-Domestic Rates . ndr@argyll-bute.gov.uk

of the Council Website. You can also sign up to receive information regarding Service

Community Council Financial Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1

4. Examination of Annual Accounts

- 4.1 These accounts require to be examined by a person suitably experienced in accountancy (preferably a qualified accountant) and who is not a member of the community council or related to a community councillor.
- 4.2. The examiners should confirm the bank and cash balances and examine all documents for authenticity, propriety, etc. to verify the accounts and sign and date them with a statement saying:

I, the undersigned, have examined the accounts of the community council for the period XXX to XXX and have found the above statement to be correctly stated and sufficiently accurate.

5. Bank Accounts and Cash

- 5.1. Each community council should open a bank account in the name of the council. It is suggested that this account should be an interest- paying cheque account. However, where a community council holds large balances due to fund raising activities better rates of interest may be earned by having a separate deposit account.
- 5.2. The account should be operated with two signatories required for each cheque, with a minimum of three persons designated as signatories for ease of operating the account. This should always be the Treasurer and two other designated officers of the community council. Community councils are encouraged to put in place additional safeguards where online banking which generally only requires one signatory. This might, for example, include regular submission of bank statements to meetings.
- 5.3. Signatories should not sign blank cheques but the cheque should be prepared by the Treasurer and presented to another signatory along with appropriate documentary evidence relating to the payment. The signatory should sign the cheque and endorse the documentation with the cheque number and the payment date to show the payment has been made.
- 5.4. Cash held by the community council should be kept to a minimum and always held in a lockfast container.

Example of Preferred Layout for Annual Accounts

XXX COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Statement of Income and Expenditure of XXX Community Council for the period XXX to XXX

<u>Income</u>	£
Council Grant	XXX
Other Donations	XXX
Income From Fund Raisers	XXX
Other Income	XXX
Bank/Building Society Interest	XXX

Total Income XXX

<u>Expenditure</u>	
Postages	XXX
Hall Hire	XXX
Advertising	XXX
(Surplus)Deficit for the Period	XXX
Opening Balance	XXX
Closing Balance as at XXX	XXX

<u>Represented By</u>	
Bank Account	XXX
Cash in hand	XXX

Prepared by õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ Öæ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ õ Æ

Examiners' Certificate

I have examined the books and records of the XX

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

The Code of Conduct for community councillors is based largely on the Code of Conduct for local authority councillors and relevant public bodies as provided for in The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000.

Community councillors, as elected representatives of their communities, have a responsibility to ~~AMCID 4-BDC BT1 0 0 6.0 [e] 23 () -121(53(nl)22(l)P3(t)11(a)2~~~~AMCID 4-TBT1 0)-255(c)~~

Objectivity

In all your decisions and opinions as a community councillor, you must endeavour to represent the overall views of your community, taking account of information which is provided to you or is publicly available, assessing its merit and gathering information as appropriate, whilst laying aside personal opinions or preferences.

You may be appointed or nominated by your community council to serve as a member of another representative body. You should ensure that this Code of Conduct is observed when carrying out the duties of the other body.

You are free to have political and/or religious affiliations; however you must ensure that you represent the interests of your community and community council and not the interests of a particular political party or other group.

Accountability and Stewardship

You are accountable for the decisions and actions that you take on behalf of your community through the community council. You must ensure that the community council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

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