Adopted by full council: 26 August 2026
Date of review: 21 May 2027

MICKLETON PARISH COUNCIL: DONATIONS RECEIVED POLICY

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1. Introduction and Purpose
1.1 **Mickleton Parish Council** recognises that members of the public, local businesses, and community organisations may wish to make voluntary donations to the Council to support its work, improve local amenities, or fund specific community projects.
1.2 The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent, consistent, and legally compliant framework for receiving and managing these donations. It ensures that the Council maintains its financial integrity, protects its reputation, avoids conflicts of interest, and remains fully accountable to the public.

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2. Legal Framework and Authority
2.1 The Council has the legal power to accept gifts and donations of real or personal property for the purpose of discharging any of its functions, or for the benefit of its area or inhabitants, under **Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972**.
2.2 The Council will manage all donations in strict compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, its own Standing Orders, and its Financial Regulations.

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3. Definition of a Donation
3.1 For the purposes of this policy, a "donation" is defined as a voluntary transfer of money, goods, land, property, or services to the Council.
3.2 A donation must be entirely philanthropic, meaning it is given with no expectation of commercial return, personal gain, contractual advantage, or direct benefit to the donor. Any contribution tied to a procurement process, planning application, or commercial contract will not be classified as a donation and will be rejected.

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4. General Principles of Acceptance
4.1 The Council welcomes donations that support its strategic objectives and benefit the local community. However, the Council reserves the right to decline any offer of a donation.
4.2 A donation will **not** be accepted if it:

- Compromises the political neutrality, independence, or integrity of the Council.
- Creates a conflict of interest, or could reasonably be perceived as an inducement or attempt to influence a council decision (e.g., planning, licensing, or procurement).
- Requires the Council to endorse, promote, or grant exclusive commercial advantages to a specific business or individual.
- Carries conditions that are unlawful, unethical, or run contrary to the Council's equal opportunities policies.
- Imposes ongoing maintenance, insurance, or operational costs that are disproportionate to the value of the gift, unless a matching maintenance fund is provided.

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5. Anonymous Donations and Donor Privacy

5.1 **Public Accountability:** As a public body funded by taxpayers, the Council is committed to maximum financial transparency. Knowing the true identity of a donor is critical to preventing money laundering, avoiding conflicts of interest, and ensuring the Council does not inadvertently align itself with inappropriate sources.

5.2 **Treatment of Anonymous Donations:**

- **Direct Anonymous Offers:** The Council will generally **not accept** anonymous financial donations or gifts handed over without verifiable donor identity, unless the sum is trivial (under £50, such as a cash drop at a community event).
- **Source Verification:** For any donation exceeding £50, the Parish Clerk/RFO must be able to verify the identity and source of the funds before the donation can be formally accepted. If the source of an anonymous donation cannot be verified, the funds will be refused, returned, or handled in accordance with local policing/financial regulations.

5.3 **Requests for Anonymity (Confidential Donors):**

- If a known, verified donor requests that their name be withheld from the public, the Council will respect their privacy to the extent permitted by law.
- The donor's identity must still be disclosed confidentially to the Parish Clerk/RFO and the Full Council to allow them to assess any potential conflicts of interest.
- If approved, the donation will be recorded in public minutes as "*Donation from a private donor*" to protect their anonymity while maintaining the public audit trail.

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6. Approval Thresholds and Financial Controls

6.1 To ensure proper governance, the following approval limits apply to all accepted donations:

Donation Value	Approval Authority	Recording & Management Requirement

£500 or under	Parish Clerk / RFO (in consultation with the Chair)	Reported to the next Full Council meeting; recorded in the minutes and financial ledger.
Over £500	Full Council	Formally debated and approved at a public Council meeting prior to acceptance.
Land, Property, or Capital Assets	Full Council (Requires prior legal review)	Requires structural evaluation, legal check of titles/covenants, and a formal vote of acceptance.

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7. Management of Earmarked and Ring-Fenced Funds
7.1 **General Donations:** Unless specified otherwise by the donor and agreed upon by the Council, all donations will be treated as general funds to be used at the Council's discretion for the benefit of the parish.
7.2 **Earmarked Donations:** If a donor specifies that their contribution must be used for a particular purpose (e.g., a specific playground project, a community bench, or nature reserve maintenance), the Council will strictly honour that restriction.
7.3 These funds will be ring-fenced within the Council's accounting system and held in a designated earmarked reserve. They cannot be diverted to general expenditure without the explicit written consent of the donor or their legal representative.

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8. Audit and Record Keeping
8.1 All received donations will be officially acknowledged in writing (paper or email) by the Parish Clerk.
8.2 Every donation—including its value, purpose, and any confidentiality agreements—will be recorded in the Council's annual accounts, asset register (if applicable), and made available for internal and external audit review.