

Ashwick Parish Council

Policy on the Use of Amanuenses

This policy exists to ensure Ashwick Parish Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s.149), and to maintain confidentiality.

An amanuensis, or scribe is someone who, in the context of parish council activities, writes down or keys a councillor's dictated words, and reads materials aloud to a councillor.

Appointment of an amanuensis shall be according to this parish council policy.

A councillor with a disability that impairs their ability to carry out day-day council communications shall have an amanuensis appointed to (a) assist them with their responsibilities and (b) safeguard council rules of confidentiality, which would otherwise be breached if a councillor were to share confidential information or materials.

A relevant disability is any physical, intellectual or mental health disability that affects written or spoken communication, and could involve, for example, impaired vision, hearing, dexterity, literacy or numeracy.

A councillor who declares a relevant need shall have an amanuensis appointed to them as soon as possible after taking up office.

It shall be the responsibility of the clerk to the council, together with the chair or other designated councillor to organise the appointment of an amanuensis, in discussion with the councillor. Where possible, the clerk shall be the appointed amanuensis. Where the amanuensis is not the clerk, they shall report to and be accountable directly to the clerk, unless the amanuensis is another councillor.

An amanuensis shall be acceptable to the councillor, the clerk and the chair of the council.

An amanuensis shall be subject to the same rules of confidentiality as the councillor to whom they are appointed.

An amanuensis shall not advise or offer an opinion to the councillor on a council matter or join in discussion with the councillor as though they were a member of the council.

An amanuensis shall be able to produce an accurate record of the councillor's words. They must be able to write legibly and use a keyboard. They are not expected to have a knowledge of council terminology or regulations.

It is the councillor's responsibility to direct the amanuensis in day -to-day needs.

The amanuensis:

- Shall write or key communications and other documents exactly as they are dictated
- Shall read communications and other documents exactly as they are written
- Shall offer no content suggestions or interpretations to the councillor
- Shall not advise the councillor on what to think or how to respond to an issue
- Shall be subject to the same rules of confidentiality as the councillor.

Approved on:- 14th July 2021