PRESENT:
Walton Parish Councillors: B. Collins [vice chair], L. Hardware, S. Loader, R. Vowles, H. Shearer, D. Harvey [6]
R. Crossman arrived during the meeting [7]
Members of the public: 1 in person [2 via teams]
Somerset Cllr: H. Shearer
Parish Clerk: H. Moore

2025.26.191 Election of Chairman

a. Due to the non-attendance of the Chair of the Council, it was ***Resolved [6/0]*** that the Vice Chair Councillor B. Collins would Chair this meeting.

2025.26.192 To receive and consider reasons for non-attendance.

a. Having considered the reason for non-attendance offered by Cllr. J. Harvey it was ***Resolved [6/0]*** that the reason was accepted for this meeting.
b. Cllr. R. Crossman had advised that they would be arriving late.

2025.26.193 Councillors

a. Disclosure of any undeclared interests and notification of any dispensations granted.
b. Training requests and review – no additional requests for training had been received. The training audit had been updated with the updates provided by Councillors.
c. Councillor vacancy – to consider any applications received and/or co-opt to fill the current vacancy.
It was noted that no applications had been received and greater promotion was required.

2025.26.194 Minutes of the previous meeting

a. It was ***Resolved [6/0]*** that the minutes of the meeting of 13th February 2026, were an accurate record. They were then signed as such by the Chair.

2025.26.195 Public Speaking and Correspondence

a. **Declarations of interest in speaking on agenda item[s]:** To speak for no more than 3 minutes on items on the agenda [Public participation shall not exceed 30 minutes in total]
   i. 3 members of the public were present to provide information about the community tree trail project.
b. **Opportunity to raise issues/concerns not on this agenda:** To speak just for information. Council to agree if the item is to be added to the agenda of a future meeting or not. [Maximum of 5 speakers per meeting and 2 minutes per item]
c. **Correspondence received from members of the public:** Regarding issues/concerns not on this agenda – for information only. Council to agree if the item is to be added to the agenda of a future meeting or not.
   I. A concern had been raised by a resident regarding the speed of the light changes of the pelican crossing on the A39 Main Street at the Church. – it was noted that the issue had been reported to highways. Councillor H. Shearer agreed to investigate this and provide a report to the next meeting.
   II. A letter had been received from a resident regarding overgrown hedging blocking the pavement – It was agreed that the Clerk would follow up with Aster homes, and if further issues arose, place an item onto the agenda.

2025.26.196 Walton Hill Community Tree Trail Project – Presentation from residents

- **Councillor R. Crossman joined the meeting during the presentation.**

a. A project proposal for nature-based learning at land at Walton Hill with a tree trail, and quarterly events, was outlined to Council. [proposal attached as appendix one] The area would be open to people to use via a permissive path accessed from a public footpath.
b. The landowner spoke in support of the project, the existing planting and maintenance, and what would be needed to provide access to the area.

c. A representative from SALC provided information on what would be needed to access the potential funding, which would need to be made direct to the Parish Council.
d. It was noted that Cllr. D. Harvey expressed an interest in becoming part of the project as a resident.
e. The Chair thanked those present for their presentation and Council went on to have a general discussion regarding the project.
f. Concerns were raised including anti-social behaviour, dog walking, long term sustainability of the project, management of events, and long-term costs.
g. It was agreed that the project was, in theory, a good idea however further specific information and discussion was needed.
h. It was agreed that the Clerk would initially raise the concerns of the Council and obtain further information for the April Parish Council meeting.

2025.26.197 Planning

a. To receive any planning decisions reported –
   I. Proposed mixed development on land to the rear of the Royal Oak – Following on from the Council invitation to the applicant to attend this meeting, it was reported that alternate dates had been provided for April.
   Council agreed to arrange an extra ordinary meeting of the Council, to facilitate the meeting. Due to room availability at the village hall, the meeting to be held at the Holy Trinity Church, if possible, on the 15th or 16th of April.
b. To consider planning applications received –
   I. RECONSULTATION – 2020/1294/OTS
   Application for outline planning permission [with all matters reserved except access] for the extension of Street Business Park comprising business, general industrial and storage/distribution uses [Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8], a residential care home and extra care accommodation [Use Class C2], and food and drink uses [Use Class E(b)], together with the construction of a new arm to the A39 Quarry Batch / A39 West Way / West End junction, associated internal access roads and paths, parking and service areas, and other associated infrastructure [Further information received February 2026] Land at 347021 136787 Gravenchon Way Street Somerset.
   1. It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that Council re submit their initial response to recommend Refusal of the application [attached as appendix two] with the additional comment that the traffic situation has worsened and traffic levels increased.
c. General planning concerns **to note**.
   I. It was reported that the rear floodlights at the Beehive self-storage centre needed to be tilted down to reduce light pollution.

2025.26.198 Cycle Racks.

a. It was reported that the Walton Trust did not need additional racks at this time.
b. It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that Council would be happy to consider a request from the Trust for additional racks if they were needed in the future.

2025.26.199 Walton Neighbourhood Plan

a. Due to the non-attendance of Cllr. J. Harvey, it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

2025.26.200 Village Upkeep

a. Kubota Mower
   I. it was reported that the Kubota mower is now taxed and added to the Council Insurance at a cost of £224.00 until full policy renewal.

II. Sign writing for the mower was discussed. Cllr. B. Collins agreeing to submit options and provide costings.

b. Grass cutting and ranger combined contract for 2026/2027 financial year – it was reported that the Ranger had agreed to the Council proposal for 36 days spread over the year [average 3 days per month]at the rate discussed.

c. Ranger Tasks for the Month were agreed as Mowing and check of the play area gate as it had been reported as closing too fast.

2025.26.201 Annual Meeting of the Parish – [village meeting] – Friday 24th February 2026

a. The general layout of the flyer was agreed with changes to title [village meeting] and year [2026].

b. It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that a budget of a maximum of £120 be allocated for the printing of the flyers with Cllr. L. Hardware to arrange.

c. It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that that the same budget as last year, £150, be allocated for refreshments.

2025.26.202 Policies to review and consider

a. IT policy
It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that the IT policy [attached as appendix three] was reviewed and adopted.

b. Risk management policy
It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that the Risk management policy [attached as appendix four] was reviewed and adopted.

2025.26.203 Finances

a. To receive and consider approval of the monthly financial report.
It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that the monthly financial report, which included a bank reconciliation as of end of February 2026, was an accurate record and it was then signed as such. [attached as appendix five].

b. Allocation of year-end balance to reserves.
It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that the balance left following the budgeted transfers, would be split equally between the village improvement reserve and the administration reserve.

c. To consider authorisation of the monthly payments schedule.
The monthly payments schedule [attached as appendix six] was ***Resolved [7/0]***to be authorised with payments to be made following this meeting.

2025.26.204 Roads, Traffic & footpaths

a. Roads –

- Cllr. L. Hardware left the meeting during this item [a] and returned.

It was noted that the lights at the junction of East Mead Lane had caused chaos and were creating an ongoing hazard. Issues and concerns had been raised with highways and the contractors on several occasions.

b. Village Gateway signs –
This item was deferred to the next meeting to give time for quotes to be obtained.

c. Footpaths –
No current concerns raised.

2025.26.205 Environment.

a. East Mead Community area – It was noted that anti-social behaviour in this area appeared to be happening on a regular basis. Councillor R. Vowles had been clearing litter. It was agreed that the PC should be asked to continue to monitor the area whenever possible.

b. Allotments – nothing reported.

c. Memorial Trees – the works to the trees had now been completed. It was ***Resolved [7/0]*** that a budget of a maximum of £250 be allocated to purchase a replacement Beech Tree. Councillor R. Vowles agreed to investigate this.

2025.26.206 Council Office

a. It was reported that the resolution of the issue of the lack of plug sockets at the Council office was in progress.

2025.26.207 Village Newsletter

a. Councillors were asked to bring proposals for villager interviews to the next meeting.

2025.26.208 Reports for information but not decision

a. Somerset Councillor[s] – including A&P LCN update.
It was reported that –
   - although the holiday food vouchers had been stopped, an alternate provision was being put in place by Somerset Council.
   - Highways may be allocated more resources
   - Following a boundary review, the number of Somerset Councillors was being reduced and Walton would now be in King Alfreds Ward.

b. Parish Councillors reports – none provided

2025.26.190 Upcoming meetings and events

- Next Parish Council Meeting – Friday 10th April 2026 – 7pm at Walton Village Hall.
- Annual Meeting of the Parish – Friday 24th April 2026 – 5.30pm at the Village Hall

THE MEETING THEN CLOSED

Signed by Chairman

Date:

Appendix One - Community Tree Trail project

Briefing: Walton Outdoor Classroom – Community Nature Learning Project

Location: Walton Hills, Walton, Somerset





Source: https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map Above: Image from the land

Project Summary

I am a Walton resident working with Harriet Hall, Peter Hall and Alice Clark (landowners) to develop an Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail on their land in the Walton Hills to provide a long-term learning and wellbeing resource for the community of Walton.

We seek to work in partnership with the Walton Parish Council to open the reforested land through an event on **Sunday 26th April**, followed by a programme of family-friendly seasonal activities encouraging outdoor learning, environmental awareness, creativity, and community connection.

The project will deliver guided and self-led nature-based activities including insect surveying, tree identification, den building, treasure hunts, and seasonal arts-based events.

This project supports community wellbeing by promoting outdoor activity, learning, and intergenerational engagement, and will create an accessible local resource for residents.

Project Description

The project will deliver:

1. Outdoor Classroom Assets

A small outdoor classroom area including a wooden seating/bench structure (new style kit), allowing groups to gather safely for activities.

2. Tree Trail

A marked and signposted trail using discs/markers attached to selected trees, supported by simple printed resources.
Two signs will be installed to guide residents and explain the purpose of the trail.

3. Community Events Programme

The Tree Trail will be launched with an opening event on 25 April. Following this, Walton will host:

- Two small summer holiday events, such as:
  - insect surveying
  - tree identification
  - den building
  - treasure hunts

- Quarterly seasonal events, including:
  - Winter: Wassail
  - Autumn: Leaf collaging
  - Summer: Flag making / outdoor creative activity

These events will connect children and families to nature while bringing creativity and art into outdoor spaces.

Why the Project is Needed (Local Need and Opportunity)

Walton has limited informal outdoor learning infrastructure, and this project responds to growing interest in accessible outdoor family activities. New housing being built have tiny gardens and social housing often has no grass/garden space for children. There are many neurodivergent children with additional learning needs who could benefit through use of the resource by the Walton C of E primary school as well. The Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail will provide a lasting community resource that encourages:

- outdoor activity and time in nature
- children's learning and curiosity
- community engagement and volunteering
- increased appreciation of the local natural environment

The trail will be open year-round and available to residents outside of organised events, providing ongoing benefit beyond the initial launch.

Who Will Benefit

The project will benefit:

- families and children living in Walton
- residents seeking gentle outdoor activity and wellbeing opportunities
- volunteers and community groups
- visitors attending community events
- local landowners and environmental knowledge through stewardship and engagement

The trail will be suitable for a wide age range, from young children through to older residents.

Project Outcomes / Expected Impact

We expect the project to achieve the following outcomes:

- increased use of local outdoor space by Walton residents
- improved community wellbeing through outdoor activity and connection
- increased children's understanding of trees, insects, and biodiversity
- stronger community cohesion through shared events and volunteering
- a sustainable programme of seasonal events that can continue year-on-year

Project Timeline

- March–April: Purchase of materials and installation preparation
- 26 April: Opening Event (launch)
- Tree trail design and set-up for self-led activity
- Summer Holidays: 2 x children/family nature events

- Quarterly thereafter: Seasonal events (winter/autumn/summer themes)

Budget / Costs

SALC Grant Costs (SALC request)

Tree Trail design (design and layout): £300

2x activities sun by Skool Beanz CIC over the summer (Steering Group coordination and delivery support) £700

Total SALC request: £1,000

Capital and Materials Costs (Walton PC match funding request)

Metal gate to keep motor crosses and animals out of wood incl. installation: ~£600-Signs x4: £120

Insurance: ~£150

Tree discs/markers (10): £30 Printing and laminating:

£50

Children's activity materials (clipboards, crayons, paper, bags, fabric etc.): £50

Total requested from Walton Parish Council: £1,000

These two funding sources together will allow the full project to be delivered. Note: Some costs may be subject to VAT depending on supplier. Suppliers include farm-signs.co.uk for signage.

Governance and Project Management

A project Steering Group will oversee delivery, governance, and ongoing maintenance. The group will consist of:

- Community member: Zina (Georgina) Roche
- Landowners: Harriet Hall and Alice Clark
- Walton Parish Council representatives: John Harvey and Helen Moore

Meeting schedule:

- Monthly meetings for the first 3 months
- Quarterly meetings thereafter

The Steering Group will oversee purchasing, installation, event planning, risk management, and community communications.

Sustainability and Maintenance

The installed assets (signage, trail discs and map) will be durable and reusable year-on-year, and the tree trail can be added to the Walton PC website perhaps under the 'community' tab, for a self-guided activity. The seasonal programme is designed to be repeatable and volunteer-led, allowing Walton to build a long-term community tradition around outdoor learning and nature-based arts.

Risk and Safeguarding (Brief)

Key risks include weather disruption, wear-and-tear, and ensuring safe supervision during children's activities. These will be mitigated by:

- scheduling flexibility
- safe siting and installation of assets
- appropriate adult supervision at events
- clear signage and simple guidance for self-led trail use

Direct Benefit to Walton Residents

This project provides a visible, practical community asset for Walton residents. The Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail will create a free-to-use local facility that strengthens community identity, supports families, and enhances the parish environment. The assets funded through the precept grant will remain in Walton for long-term community benefit and will support an ongoing programme of events throughout the year.

This is a low-cost, high-impact project that will create a long-term parish asset and an ongoing programme of inclusive community events. Funding support will enable Walton to launch the Tree Trail successfully in April and establish a sustainable programme of outdoor learning and seasonal celebration.

Note: AI used to summarise and format report.

Appendix Two – 2020 Planning response

Walton Parish Council recommend REFUSAL Of this application for the following reasons:
o The loss of the Green Gap between Street and Walton -
Walton Parish Council strongly objects to the erosion of the Green Gap between Walton and Street as it will undermine the separate and distinct nature of the Village of Walton.
Walton is a small rural village, designated as a Secondary village within the District Local Plan. Street is identified within the district local plan as a Mendip Town. Walton values its unique and rural nature and does not want to see this village identity eroded.
- Mendip District Local Plan Core Policy 8 speaks of including a green gap to ensure physical separation of Street and Walton. Walton Parish Council objects strongly to the removal of the physical separation between Walton and Street proposed by this planning application.
- Mendip District Local Plan part one
Core policy 4.72. Sustaining rural communities, states that there should be a protection of the open countryside for its intrinsic value.
Core Policy 4.81 states that the desirability of unfettered development in the countryside must not undermine its intrinsic value.
o Increase in Traffic use of the A39 through Walton -
The expansion of the 'Street Business Park' in any manner has the potential to substantially increase the volume of traffic using the A39 through the village of Walton. This will have a detrimental impact on Walton residents, both those who live along the A39 and those who have to negotiate crossing the A39 in order to access community facilities which are located on both sides of Main Street. In the short term this development will cause increased congestion both at the proposed new junction and at the existing access point onto the roundabout.
If the recommendation of the parish council is ignored and the application does receive approval Walton Parish Council considers that the following conditions should be imposed:

1. Section 106 funds be specifically allocated to the improvement and maintenance of the separate identity of the village of Walton through the strengthening of facilities at the core / heart of the village.
2. With regard to the new access onto the West Way and the ongoing problems with the existing access onto the roundabout.
The development of Plot 1 [northern area] should not occur until there is a completed link between the proposed new access road and the existing access. [Across the area that has already received planning permission] This is in order to reduce the impact on the existing road infrastructure of the Business Park which already suffers from congestion.
3. With regard to the proposed uses stated within the application - these should be fixed and not subject to review.
The proposed development is intended to facilitate full time, high quality employment for local residents. Previously both the quality and quantity of employment within the 'business' park have been reduced creating a retail location that no longer provides the type of employment required to support the level of housing proposed within the Mendip District Local plan for this area

Appendix Three – IT policy

PROPOSED

WALTON PARISH COUNCIL
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

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Purpose of the IT Policy

The purpose of an IT policy is to establish clear parameters for how councillors, staff, and other authorised users use council-provided technology or equipment in the course of their duties. A well-defined policy helps to:

- Set expectations for appropriate use of equipment and systems;
- Raise awareness of risks associated with IT use;
- Safeguard the council's data and digital assets;
- Clarify what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable use;
- Outline the consequences of policy breaches.

Councils will also need to determine and clearly state whether limited personal use of IT equipment is permitted (for example, checking personal email or online shopping during lunch breaks).

Monitoring of IT Use

As an IT provider, the council has the right to monitor the use of its IT equipment and systems, provided there is a legitimate reason for doing so and councillors, employees and other authorised users are informed that such monitoring may take place. Any monitoring must be proportionate and comply with relevant data protection and privacy laws. Other persons may be included if they access or use council systems e.g. if they have a council e-mail address

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all councillors, staff, and other authorised users, regardless of their working location or pattern, including those who are home-based, office-based, or work on a flexible or part-time basis. It sets out the expectations for the appropriate use of IT equipment and systems provided by the council.

Computer use

Hardware

1.1.1 Council computer equipment is provided for council purposes only.

1.1.2 Locking computers when leaving desk, all councillors, staff, and other authorised users must lock their computers when leaving their desks to prevent unauthorised access. This applies to all council and personal devices used for work. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

1.1.3 All computer and other electronic equipment supplied should be treated with good care at all times. Computer equipment is expensive, and any damage sustained to any equipment will have a financial impact on the council.

1.1.4 Computer and electronic hardware should be kept clean, and every precaution taken to prevent food and drink being dropped or spilled onto it.

1.1.5 Equipment should not be dismantled or reassembled without seeking advice.

1.1.6 Councillors, staff, and other authorised are not to purchase any computer or mobile equipment (including software). Unless previously authorised.

1.1.7 Personal disks, USB stick, CDs, DVDs, data storage devices etc cannot be used on council computers without the prior approval of the Clerk or Chair

Equipment

2.1 Portable equipment

2.1.1 Portable equipment includes laptop computers, netbooks, tablets, mobile and smart phones with email capability and access to the internet etc.

2.1.2 All portable computers must be stored safely and securely when not in use in the office, i.e. when travelling or when working from home. Portable equipment (unless locked in a secure cabinet or office) should be kept with or near the user at all times; should not be left unattended when away from council premises and should never be left in parked vehicles or at any council or non-council premises.

2.1.3 It is important to ensure all portable devices are protected with encryption in case they are lost or stolen. All smartphones or tablets that hold council data, including emails and files, must be protected with a pin code. Where possible, these devices should also be programmed to erase all content after several unsuccessful attempts to break in. Any security set on these devices must not be disenabled or removed.

2.1.4 If an item of portable equipment is lost or damaged this should be reported to Council. If the loss or damage is due to an act of negligence, the individual responsible may be liable to meet the first £100 of the loss/damage.

2.1.5 To protect confidential information, unless it is a requirement of the job and this has been authorised, it is forbidden for photographs or videos to be taken on council premises, without the prior written permission of the Council or the Clerk. This includes mobile telephones with camera function, camcorder, tape or other recording device for sound or pictures - moving or still.

2.1.6 Under no circumstances should any non-public meeting or conversation be recorded without the permission of those present. This does not affect statutory rights (under The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014).

2.1.7 In addition, the council does not permit webcams (which may be pre-installed on many laptops) to be used in the workplace, other than for conference calls for council purposes.

2.2 Use of own devices

2.2.1 The Council recognises that some councillors, staff, and other authorised users may wish to use their own smartphones, tablets, laptops etc to access our servers, private clouds or networks for normal council purposes, including, but not limited to, reading their emails, or to store data on the council's server(s) or access data in other services. Such devices should be kept up to date so that any vulnerabilities in the operating system or other software on the device are appropriately patched or updated.

2.2.2 However, the same security precautions apply to personal devices as to the council's desktop equipment. For continuity purposes, calls made to external parties for Council business should be made on council landlines or mobile phone numbers, or the Council telephone number be provided, Any emails sent from own devices should be sent from a council email account and should not identify the individual's personal email address.

2.2.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised persons that use council systems are expected to use all devices in an ethical and respectful manner and in accordance with this policy. Accessing inappropriate websites or services on any device via the IT infrastructure that is paid for or provided by the council carries a high degree of risk, and, for employees, may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal (without notice). For Workers or Contractors, we may terminate the worker agreement. This is irrespective of the ownership of the device used. An example would be downloading copyright music illegally or accessing pornographic material.

2.2.4 In cases of legal proceedings against the council or external stakeholders, the council may need to temporarily take possession of a device, whether council-owned or personal to retrieve the relevant data.

2.2.5 Wherever possible the user should maintain a clear separation between the personal data processed on the council's behalf and that processed for their own personal use, for example, by using different apps for council and personal use. If the device supports both work and personal profiles, the work profile must always be used for work-related purposes.

2.2.6 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who intend to use their own devices via the council's infrastructure must ensure that they:

- use a 6-digit pin, strong password, or fingerprint (preferably the latter) to protect their device(s) from being accessed. For smartphones and tablets this should lock the device after a number of failed login attempts.
- configure their device(s) to automatically prompt for a password after a period of inactivity.
- always password protect any documents containing confidential information that are sent as attachments to an email, and notify the password separately (preferably by a means other than email);
- for smartphones and tablets, activate the automatic device wipe function (where available).
- ensure secure WiFi networks are used;
- ensure that work-related data cannot be viewed or retrieved by family or friends who may use the device.
- Inform the Council if their device(s) is/are lost, stolen, or inappropriately accessed where there is risk of access to council data or resources. To prevent phones being used, they will need to retain the details of their IMEI number and the SIM number of the device as their provider will require this to deactivate it.

2.2.7 Personal information and sensitive data should never be saved on councillors, staff, or other authorised users own devices as this may breach confidentiality agreements, especially if the device is used by other people from time to time.

2.2.8 If removable media are used to transfer data (e.g. USB drives or CDs), the user must also securely delete the data on the media once the transfer is complete.

2.2.9 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who open any attachments should ensure that any cached copies are deleted immediately after use. The Chair and/or Clerk will provide assistance or training in doing this if needed. Additional risks include data belonging to the council being accessed by unauthorised persons if the device(s) is lost, stolen, or used without the owner's permission.

2.2.10 Prior to the disposal of any device that has work data stored on it, and in the event of a user leaving the council, councillors, staff, and other authorised users are required to allow access to the device to ensure that all passwords, user access shortcuts and any identifiable data are removed from the device.

2.2.11 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must take responsibility for understanding how their device(s) work in respect to the above rules if they are accessing council servers/services via their own IT equipment. Risks to the user's personal device(s) include data loss as a result of a crash of the operating system, bugs and viruses, software or hardware failures and programming errors rendering a device inoperable. The council will use reasonable endeavours to assist, but councillors, staff, and other authorised users are personally liable for their own device(s) and for any costs incurred as a result of the above.

Health and safety

3.1.1 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who work in council offices will be provided with an appropriate workstation.

3.1.2 The council has a duty to ensure that regular appropriate eye tests, carried out by a competent person, are offered to employees using display screen equipment.

3.1.3 Any VDU user who feels that their workstation requires changes must speak to a member of the staffing working group. If any hazards are detected at a workstation, including 'noises' from the IT equipment, this should be reported immediately to the Chair.

Password and Authentication Policy

4.1.1 All user accounts must be protected by strong, secure passwords. The council recommends the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) recommendations for creating passwords using three random words (e.g. PurpleCandleRiver). This method helps create passwords that are both strong and easy to remember, while offering effective protection against common cyber threats such as brute-force attacks. This approach is endorsed in NALC guidance.
In addition to strong passwords, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) should be enabled wherever possible. MFA requires users to provide two or more independent forms of verification—for example, a password (something you know) and a code sent to your phone (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and personal data.
To further strengthen account security:

- Initial user account passwords must be generated by the IT provider.
- Default passwords provided by vendors or the IT provider must be changed immediately upon installation or setup.
- Service or System (e.g. Website) account passwords are generated and managed by the IT provider.
- The council recommends these practices as part of its commitment to robust information security and to support compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

4.1.2 Access to Passwords

- Passwords are personal and must not be shared under any circumstances.
- Only the assigned user of an account may access or use the associated password.
- In exceptional cases (e.g., incident response or employee offboarding), access to system credentials may be granted to authorised personnel from the IT provider with appropriate approvals and logging.
- Administrative credentials must be stored securely and only accessible to authorised personnel with a copy provided to the Chair in a sealed envelope, only to be accessed in an emergency.

4.1.3 Password Storage and Management

- Passwords must not be stored in plain text or written down in insecure locations.
- Passwords must be stored using an encrypted password manager.

4.1.4 Password Change Requirements
- Immediately change password if compromise is suspected.

4.1.5 Password Access Control and Logging
- All access to administrative or shared credentials must be logged and auditable.
- Attempts to access unauthorized passwords will be treated as a security incident.

4.1.6 Responsibility
- Users are responsible for creating and maintaining secure passwords for their accounts.

The IT security provider is responsible for:
- Managing system/service credentials.
- Enforcing password policies. Auditing and monitoring password-related security practices.

Monitoring

5.1.1 The council reserves the right to monitor and maintain logs of computer usage and inspect any files stored on its network, servers, computers, or associated technology to ensure compliance with this policy as well as relevant legislation. Internet, email, and computer usage is continually monitored as part of the council's protection against computer viruses, ongoing maintenance of the system, and when investigating faults.

5.1.5 The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted.

5.1.6 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users have a number of rights in relation to their data, including the right to make a subject access request and the right to have data rectified or erased in some circumstances. You can find further details of these rights and how to exercise them in the council's data protection policy.

5.1.7 Such monitoring and the retrieval of the content of any messages may be for the purposes of checking whether the use of the system is legitimate, to find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure, to assist in the investigation of wrongful acts, or to comply with any legal obligation.

5.1.8 The council reserves the right to inspect all files stored on its computer systems in order to assure compliance with this policy. The council also reserves the right to monitor the types of sites being accessed and the extent and frequency of use of the internet at any time, both inside and outside of working hours to ensure that the system is not being abused and to protect the council from potential damage or disrepute.

5.1.9 Any use that the council considers to be 'improper', either in terms of the content or the amount of time spent on this, may result in disciplinary proceedings.

5.1.10 All computers will be periodically checked and scanned for unauthorised programmes and viruses.

Remote working

6.1.1 Increased IT security measures apply to those who work away from their normal place of work (e.g. whilst travelling, working from home or at any other different venue), as follows:
- if logging into the council's systems or services remotely, using computers that either do not belong to the council or are not owned by the user, any passwords must not be saved, and the user must log out at the end of the session deleting all logs and history records within the browser used. If the configuration of the devise does not clearly support these actions (for example at an internet café), council services should not be accessed from that device.
- the location and direction of the screen should be checked to ensure confidential information is out of view. Steps should be taken to avoid messages being read by other people, including other travellers on public transport etc.

- any data printed should be collected and stored securely.
- all electronic files should be password protected and the data saved to the council's system/services when accessible.
- papers, files or computer equipment must not be left unattended at non Council premises unless arrangements have been made for them to be kept in a locked room or cabinet if they are to be left unattended at any time;
- any data should be kept safely and should only be disposed of securely.
- papers, files, data sticks/storage, flash drive or backup hard drives should not be left unattended in cars, except where it is entirely unavoidable for short periods, in which case they must be locked in the boot of the car. If staying away overnight, council data should be taken into the accommodation, care being taken that it will not be interfered with by others or inadvertently destroyed.
- where possible the ability to remotely wipe any mobile devices that process sensitive information should be retained in the case of loss or theft.

Email

7.1.1 Council email facilities are intended to promote effective and speedy communication on work-related matters. Although we encourage the use of email, it can be risky. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users need to be careful not to introduce viruses onto council systems and should take proper account of the security advice below.

7.1.2 On occasion, it will be quicker to action an issue by telephone or face to face, rather than via protracted email chains. Emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face or telephone conversations. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are expected to decide which is the optimum channel of communication to complete their tasks quickly and effectively.

7.1.3 These rules are designed to minimise the legal risks run when using email at work and to guide councillors, staff, and other authorised users as to what may and may not be done. If there is something which is not covered in the policy, councillors, staff, and other authorised users should ask the Clerk or Chairman, rather than assuming they know the right answer.

7.1.4 All councillors, staff, and other authorised users who need to use email as part of their role will normally be given their own council email address and account. The council may, at any time, withdraw email access, should it feel that this is no longer necessary for the role or that the system is being abused.

7.1.5 Email messages sent on the council's account are for council use only. Personal use is not permitted.

Use of the Internet

8.1 Copyright

8.1.1 Much of what appears on the Internet is protected by copyright. Any copying without permission, including electronic copying, is illegal and therefore prohibited. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 set out the rules. The copyright laws not only apply to documents but also to software. The infringement of the copyright of another person or organisation could lead to legal action being taken against the council and damages being awarded, as well as disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against the perpetrator.

8.1.2 It is easy to copy electronically, but this does not make it any less an offence. The council's policy is to comply with copyright laws, and not to bend the rules in any way.

8.1.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should not assume that because a document or file is on the Internet, it can be freely copied. There is a difference between information in the 'public domain' (which is no longer confidential or secret information but is still copyright protected) and information which is not protected by copyright (such as where the author has been dead for more than 70 years).

8.1.4 Usually, a website will contain copyright conditions; these warnings should be read before downloading or copying.

8.1.5 Copyright and database right law can be complicated. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should check with the Clerk or Chair if unsure about anything.

8.2 Trademarks, links and data protection

8.2.1 The council does not permit the registration of any new domain names or trademarks relating to the council's names or products anywhere in the world, unless authorised to do so. Nor should they add links from any of the council's web pages to any other external sites without checking first with the Chair or Clerk.

8.2.2 Special rules apply to the processing of personal and sensitive personal data. For further guidance on this, see the council's data protection policy.

8.3 Accuracy of information

8.3.1 One of the main benefits of the internet is the access it gives to large amounts of information, which is often more up to date than traditional sources such as libraries. Be aware that, as the internet is uncontrolled, much of the information may be less accurate than it appears.

Use of social media

9.1.1 Social media includes blogs; Wikipedia and other similar sites where text can be posted; multimedia or user generated media sites (YouTube); social networking sites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, etc.); virtual worlds (Second Life); text messaging and mobile device communications and more traditional forms of media such as TV and newspapers. Care should be taken when using social media at any time, either using council systems or at home.

9.1.2 Personal use of social networking/media and chat sites should be restricted to breaks during working hours, or after hours with permission.

9.1.3 The council recognises the importance of councillors, staff, and other authorised users joining in and helping to shape sector conversation and enhancing its image through blogging and interaction in social media. Therefore, where it is relevant to use social networking sites as part of the individual's position, this is acceptable.

However, inappropriate comments and postings can adversely affect the reputation of the council, even if it is not directly referenced. If comments or photographs could reasonably be interpreted as being associated with the council, or if remarks about external stakeholders could be regarded as abusive, humiliating, sexual harassment, discriminatory or derogatory, or could constitute bullying or harassment, the council will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should be aware that parishioners or other local organisations may read councillors, staff, and other authorised users' personal weblogs, to acquire information, for example, about their work, internal council business, and employee morale. Therefore, even if the council is not named, care should be taken with any views expressed.

9.1.4 To protect both the council and its interests, everyone is required to comply with the following rules about social media, whether in relation to their council role or personal social networking sites, and irrespective of whether this is during or after working hours:

- Contacts from any of the council's databases should not be downloaded and connected with on LinkedIn or other social networking sites with electronic address book facilities, unless this has been authorised.
- Any blog that mentions the council, its current work, councillors, employees, other users associated with the council, partner organisations, local groups, suppliers, parishioners, should identify the author as one of its councillors or employees and state that the views expressed on the blog or website are theirs alone and do

not represent the views of the Council. Even if the council is not mentioned, care should be taken with any views expressed on social media sites and any views should clearly be stated to be the writer's own (e.g. via a disclaimer statement such as: "The comments and other content on this site are my own and do not represent the positions or opinions of my employer/ the council.") Writers must not claim or give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the council.

- Any employee who is developing a site or writing a blog that will mention the council, must inform Council that they are writing this and gain agreement before going 'live'.
- The council expects councillors, staff, and other authorised users to be respectful about the council and its current or potential staff, including employees, councillors, clerks, and authorised users and not to engage in any name calling or any behaviour that will reflect negatively on its reputation. Any unauthorised use of copyright materials, any unfounded or derogatory statements, or any misrepresentation is not viewed favourably and could constitute gross misconduct.
- Photos or videos that include employees or other workers wearing uniforms or clothing displaying the council's name or logo should not be posted on social media if they could reflect negatively on the individual, their role, their colleagues, or the council. Additionally, photos, videos, or audio recordings must not be taken on council premises without explicit permission
- Comments posted by councillors, staff, and other authorised users on any sites should be knowledgeable, accurate and professional and should not compromise the council in any way.
- Inappropriate conversations should not take place on any social networking sites, including forums.
- Any writing about or displaying photos or videos of internal activities that involves current councillors, staff, and other authorised persons, might be considered a breach of data protection and a breach of privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, their permission should be gained prior to uploading any such material. Details of any kind relating to any events, conversations, materials or documents that are meant to be private, confidential or internal to the council should not be posted. This may include manuals; procedures; training documents; non-public financial or operational information; personal information regarding other councillors, staff, and other authorised users anything to do with a disciplinary case, grievance, allegation of bullying/harassment or discrimination, or legal issue; any other secret, confidential, or proprietary information or information that is subject to confidentiality agreements. This does not affect statutory requirements to publish information including under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must be aware that they are personally liable for anything that they write or present online (including on an online forum or blog, post, feed or website). Councillors should always be mindful of the Members Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for comments, content, or images that are defamatory, embarrassing, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment. They may also be sued by other organisations, and any individual or council that views their comments, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, other councillors, staff, and other authorised users can raise grievances for alleged bullying and/or harassment.
- Postings to websites or anywhere on the internet and social media of any kind, or in any press or media of any kind, should not breach copyright or other law or disclose confidential information, defame or make derogatory comments about the council or its councillors, staff, and other authorised users, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach data protection legislation.
- Contacts by the media relating to the council, should be referred to the Clerk
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook must ensure that the information on their profile is accurate and up to date and must update their profile on leaving the council.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use X.com, LinkedIn, or other social media/networking sites for council development purposes must ensure they provide the council with login details, including password(s), so that these sites can be accessed and updated in their absence.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who have left the council must not post any inappropriate comments about the council or its councillors, staff, and other authorised users on LinkedIn, Facebook, X.com or any other social media/networking sites.
- During your employment/ involvement with the council, you may create or obtain access to a variety of professional contacts and confidential information. This includes, but is not limited to, contacts made through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn, where those contacts have been established or

maintained in your capacity as a councillor, member of staff, or other authorised user. All such contacts will be considered council property and may be subject to disclosure upon request.

9.1.5 Note that the council may, from time to time, monitor external postings on social media sites. Any employee who has a profile (for example on LinkedIn or Facebook) must not misrepresent themselves or their role with the council. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are also advised that social media sites are not an appropriate place to air council concerns or complaints: these should be raised with the council or formally through the grievance procedure.

9.1.6 It is important to note that external stakeholders contact details and information remain the property of the council. In addition, councillors, staff, and other authorised users leaving the council will be required to delete all council-related data including stakeholder contact details from any personal device/equipment.

Misuse

Misuse of IT systems and equipment is not in line with the council's standards of conduct and will be taken seriously. Any inappropriate or unauthorised use may lead to formal action, including disciplinary proceedings or, in serious cases, dismissal.

Appendix Four – Risk Management policy

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the governance and management arrangements for the effective management of risk.
2. Walton Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper practises, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. The Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control.
3. Walton Parish Council is committed to effective risk management, adopting best practices in the identification, evaluation, and control of risk, to eliminate or reduce risk to an acceptable level. Council will aim to anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental, and legislative requirements, prevent injury and damage, and reduce the cost of risk.
4. This policy is supported by:
    - Council Risk Management Assessment [appendix one]
    - Statement of internal Control and annual review of the effectiveness of internal control
    - Other Council approved policies and procedures.

PROCEDURE

1. The annual internal audit report will be formally reported and minuted at a full Council meeting.
2. Risk assessments are to be carried out to identify, assess and record risks. Having done this Council needs to address risk by ensuring appropriate measures are in place to mitigate and manage risk. For example, the introduction of internal controls and/ or additional, appropriate insurance cover.
3. The Council insurance policy [ies] is [are] reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that is appropriate to the Councils current activities.
4. Council maintains an asset register for insurance and asset management purposes. Changes will be made to the insurance policy as and when required. For example, acquiring a new piece of equipment.

RESPONSIBILITY

1. Walton Parish Council as a corporate body is responsible for the effective management of risk
2. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis or as required to comply with legislative change.

DETAILS

Adopted &
Reviewed ~~July 2024~~ March 2026

Appendix One - Council Risk Management Assessment.

AREA	RISK	CONTROLS	FURTHER ACTION IF REQUIRED
ASSETS	PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL ASSETS	Property insured Asset register maintained Kubota Mower Insurance / tax	Review cover at renewal
	SECURITY OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND RECORDS	- Village hall alarmed - Locked filing cabinets - Fireproof safe for lease/document security - Fireproof bags for minute book storage - Cloud back up of computer records [automatic]	
	MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT ETC.	-Equipment currently maintained on an ad hoc basis -Play area equipment assessed weekly [visual] and annually [in depth] - Maintenance checks of Kubota Mower monthly & prior to use.	
FINANCE	BANKING	Bank accounts with Lloyds Bank – current, reserve and legacy reserve	
	FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND RECORDS	-Monthly reconciliation prepared by RFO and reported to Council. - all payments authorised by Council -2 signatories for payments. [online 3 – clerk to set up & 2 Councillors to authorise.] -Annual internal and external audit -annual review of financial regulations at full council meeting	
	COMPLY WITH CUSTOM & EXCISE REGULATIONS	VAT payments recorded and reclaimed by RFO as required – at least annually	
	SOUND BUDGETTING TO UNDERLIE ANNUAL PRECEPT	-council agrees detailed budget annually in Autumn -precept derived directly from budget -expenditure against budget reported to Council at least quarterly, generally monthly	

LIABILITY	RISK TO THIRD PARTY, PROPERTY OR INDIVIDUALS	-Insurance in place -open spaces checked regularly -weekly checks of play area and written records kept -Risk assessments of individual events carried out as necessary - Risk assessment of East Mead Community Area - compliance with COVID or other health restrictions and regulations as required	
	LEGAL LIABILITY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF OWNERSHIP	-Insurance in place - weekly checks of play area and written records kept -annual checks by independent company of play area -compliance with website accessibility legislation - regular check of Eastmead Community Area - regular checks of telephone box book exchange - monitor council footpath - Maintenance checks of Kubota Mower monthly & prior to use.	
	PROPER DOCUMENT CONTROL	- Locked filing cabinets - Fireproof safe for lease/document security - Fireproof bags for minute book storage - Automatic cloud storage as backup	
EMPLOYER LIABILITY	COMPLY WITH EMPLOYMENT LAW	-Member ship of various national and regional bodies including SLCC and SLCC - Staff contract in place -Pension scheme in place	
	COMPLY WITH INLAND REVENUE REQUIREMENTS	-Regular advice from HMRC -Online registration and submissions - annual internal audit	
	SAFETY OF STAFF AND VISITORS	-Lone working risk assessment - compliance with COVID19 or other health restrictions and regulations as required	
LEGAL LIABILITY	ENSURE ACTIVITIES ARE WITHIN LEGAL POWERS	- Clerk to clarify legal position on any new proposal - Legal advice to be sought where necessary	- Note – no current general power of competence
	INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION	- Regular review of GDPR requirements and controls	

	PROPER AND TIMELY REPORTING VIA THE MINUTES	-Council meets monthly and receives and approves minutes of previous meeting - Minutes made available on website	
COUNCILLORS PROPERTY	REGISTERS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY IN PLACE	- Register of interests completed by all councillors - Gifts and hospitality register maintained as required	

Risk management assessment reviewed annually by Clerk Reviewed

by Full Council ~~July 2024,~~ March 2026

Appendix Five - Monthly Financial report

1.Bank reconciliation as of 28th Feb 2026

Detail	Amount	Column1
Balance brought forward from 31st January 2026 Bank reconciliation	**£ 65,381.76**	
Less Payments authorised at February 2026 PCM:	£ -	
HMRC month 11	£ 176.06	
BWP Creative ~Ltd.	£ 36.00	
Michael Webb	£ 73.34	
Somerset Council	£ 507.00	
Go.2.services	£ 120.00	
The Walton Trust	£ 12.00	
St. Andrews Press	£ 439.00	
Viking office depot	£ 173.39	
H. Moore	£ 1,134.93	SO
NEST	£ 173.26	DD
EE	£ 22.20	DD
Bank service charge	£ 4.25	
sub total	**£ 62,510.33**	
Plus receipts:	**£ -**	
Bank interest general deposit	£ 21.75	
bank interest harry skinner deposit	£ 1.94	
Newsletter advert- NL2026-02-01	£ 90.00	
Newsletter advert- NL2026-02-03	£ 90.00	
Receipts and Payments Balance as of 28/02/2026	**£ 62,714.02**	
Balance to agree with bank statements:	**£ -**	
current account [Community account]	**£ 11,538.82**	
reserve account [general deposit]	**£ 48,130.53**	
Harry Skinner Reserve	**£ 4,179.60**	

Signed by Chairman

Date:

	Sub total	**£ 63,848.95**	
Less uncleared / outstanding, payments:		**£ -**	
salary *[late payment due to 28th being a weekend & only 28 days in Feb.]*		£ 1,134.93	
Bank Accounts Total as of 28/02/2026		**£ 62,714.02**	

2. Balance of Reserves as of 28th February 2026

RESERVE	TYPE	BALANCE
Administration	*designated*	17554.58
Election Expenses	*designated*	799.00
Play area	*designated*	12,477.71
East Mead Field	*restricted*	8,809.87
Community Benefit	*restricted*	846.91
Office Equipment	*designated*	791.68
Events	*designated*	2,125.07
Environment	*designated*	2,760.52
Village Improvement	*designated*	1,465.19
Village upkeep equipment	*designated*	500.00
TOTAL	*[balance of general deposit account]*	**48,130.53**

(Designated reserves are those agreed [ring fenced] by Council, restricted reserves are those restricted by grant conditions etc.)

3. Transfers made between accounts in February 2026 – None

4. Harry Skinner Reserve Account

Balance £4,179.60 *[restricted reserve]*

5. End of year transfers to reserves

Budgeted transfers already approved:

- Play area reserve – £1,400.00
- Village upkeep equipment - £500.00

Council will need to consider the priority of the allocation of the remaining current account year-end balance to reserves.

It is recommended that this includes:

- A transfer to the general administration reserve to keep it at 40% of the annual Council budget
- An additional transfer to the village upkeep equipment reserve [due to mower ownership]

An Item for Council to consider the priority of the allocation of reserves is included on the agenda of the March Parish Council Meeting.

Appendix Six – March 2026 Payments for authorisation

Walton Parish Council — Payment sheet Financial year 2025 - 2026 — **March 13th 2026**

Payments for authorisation

cheque number etc.	payee	budget area	budget set	balance	amount authorised	VAT	VAT reg.No.	budget remaining	invoice number	invoice date	total payment	notes
Standing order	H Moore	Staff costs	£ 17,231.78	£ 1,194.67	£ 1,134.93			£ 59.74	Month 12	March	£ 1,134.93	SO
Direct Debit	NEST	Staff costs	£ 17,231.78	£ 59.74	£ 173.26			-£ 113.52	Month 12	March	£ 173.26	DD
Direct Debit	EE	Admin	£ 3,075.00	£ 1,017.08	£ 22.20	£ 3.70	245 7193 48	£ 998.58	March	March	£ 22.20	DD
								£ -			£ -	
2026/03/p1	HMRC	Staff costs	£ 17,231.78	-£ 113.52	£ 176.26			-£ 289.78	Month 12	March	£ 176.26	
2026/03/p2	Michael Webb	Play area	£ 2,500.00	£ 1,441.80	£ 73.34			£ 1,368.46	Inv.WG/042030	March	£ 73.34	
2026/03/p3	SLCC	Admin	£ 3,075.00	£ 998.58	£ 149.40	£ 0.90	891 7527 83	£ 850.08	ORDS15502.1	March	£ 149.40	
2026/03/p4	Zurich	Insurance	£ 850.00	£ 220.59	£ 223.94			-£ 3.35	Ref:3706971	March	£ 223.94	
2026/03/p5	Aboricare Ltd.	Harry Skinner Fund	nil for project	£ 4,179.60	£ 1,350.00	£ 225.00	570 3129 62	£ 3,054.60	Ref: 113650	March	£ 1,350.00	
2026/03/p6	The Walton Trust	Admin	£ 3,075.00	£ 850.08	£ 137.50			£ 712.58	Inv.215	Feb	£ 137.50	
2026/03/p7	The Walton Trust	room hire	£ 250.00	£ 118.00	£ 12.00			£ 106.00	Inv.211	Feb	£ 12.00	
2026/03/p8	Go.2.services	village upkeep	£ 7,930.00	£ 4,563.00	£ 360.00			£ 4,203.00	Inv.2214	March	£ 360.00	
								£ -			£ -	
								£ -			£ -	
								£ -			£ -	
								£ -			£ -	
								£ -			£ -	
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE:				£ *3,812.83*						£ *3,812.83*	

online payments total: £ 2,482.44

TWO COUNCILLORS TO SIGN CHEQUES, INITIAL CHEQUE STUBS / AUTHORISE PAYMENTS ONLINE,
INITIAL INVOICES, AND SIGN THIS SCHEDULE PLEASE

Cllr.	Sign:	Date:

NOTES:	
Reference NUMBER:	NOTE:
2026/03/p1	Tax & NI
2026/03/p2	play area grass cutting
2026/03/p3	Local Council Admin ref book [re powers, policy & legislation]
2026/03/p4	Kubota mower insurance
2026/03/p5	Works to memorial trees
2026/03/p6	Office rent
2026/03/p7	meeting room hire
2026/03/p8	Ranger fees

closed 10am on day of meeting

KEY:
DD or SO
Online payment
cheque

Notes:

- **Overspend in staff costs budget** due to underestimated cost of unknown national pay award at time of budget creation - Council to consider/ agree, £289.78 to be paid from Administration reserve

- **Overspend in insurance budget** due to unpredicted aquisition of Kubota mower - Council to consider/agree, £3.35 to be paid from Administration reserve