

WESTHAMPNETT PARISH COUNCIL

Serving Westhampnett, Maudlin and Westerton

Clerk to the Council: **Beccy Anderson**

Westhampnett Community Hall

Hadrian Drive

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To Westhampnett Parish Councillors:

Cllr W Holden, Cllr D Plummer, Cllr S Burborough, Cllr T Ashcroft, Cllr S James, Cllr S Hanafin, Cllr O'Meara and Cllr C McLeish.

I hereby give notice that a **Full Council Meeting** of the Parish Council will be held at Westhampnett Community Hall, Hadrian Drive, Westhampnett, PO18 0FP on **Monday 8th July 2024 at 7pm** and you are hereby summoned to attend such meeting.

Beccy Anderson, Clerk to the Council

3rd July 2024

AGENDA

1	<u>OPEN MEETING & TAKE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	<u>Chair</u>
2	<u>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:</u> To receive from members declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests, in addition to those listed attached in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting, in accordance with Localism Act 2011 s. 29 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.	<u>ALL</u>
3	<u>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</u> (5 minutes) - <i>prior notice of any question to the Parish Clerk please</i>	
4	<u>REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL BODIES:</u> including District Councillor (Henry Potter) and County Councillor (Jeremy Hunt) and local organisations; reports to be submitted by email to the Parish Clerk for circulation to Councillors prior to the meeting. Questions to be taken at the meeting.	
5	<u>CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE:-</u> (i) Annual Parish Meeting 13 th May 2024 (ii) Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting 19 th June 2024	<u>ALL</u>
6	<u>INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT</u> Councillors to note and approve the 'Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward' extract from the 2023/2024 Internal Audit Report from Mulberry LA Services	<u>ALL</u>
7	<u>PAYMENT APPROVAL</u> Councillors to approve July 2024 Cheque payments.	<u>ALL</u>
8	<u>POLICIES/STANDING ORDERS</u> Councillors to approve (previously adopted) policies (as per attached list)	<u>ALL</u>
9	<u>FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</u> Councillors to approve Financial Regulations (NALC model Financial Regulations April 2024)	<u>ALL</u>
10	<u>RISK ASSESSMENT</u> Councillors to discuss updating the Parish Council Risk Assessment	<u>ALL</u>
11	<u>PARISH COUNCIL NOTICE BOARDS</u> Councillors to discuss the possible purchase of metal notice boards (to replace wooden notice boards)	<u>ALL</u>
12	<u>COMMUNITY HALL DEVELOPMENT</u> Councillor T Ashcroft to speak on behalf of the Community Hall Committee regarding the proposed development of the Community Hall.	<u>Cllr TC/ ALL</u>

13	<u>TRO WESTERTON ROAD</u> Councillors to be updated regarding the application for speed reduction on Westerton Road.	<u>Chair</u> <u>ALL</u>
14	<u>VILLAGE NAME SIGNS</u> Councillors to be updated regarding the purchase of village name signs for installation on the village gates at Westerton, Maudlin and Westhampnett.	<u>Cllr DP</u> <u>ALL</u>
15	<u>CYCLE/FOOT PATH</u> Councillors to discuss a proposal to request a cycle/foot path along the edge of the solar field behind the hedge way to the Stane Street cycle/footpath	<u>Cllr SB</u> <u>ALL</u>
16	<u>PLANNING</u> Councillors to be updated regarding any ongoing planning matters.	<u>Cllr SB</u>
17	<u>PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE</u> Councillors to be updated regarding the development of the new PC website	<u>Clerk</u>
18	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING:</u> Monday 9 th September 2024, 7pm	<u>Chair</u>
19	<u>CLOSE MEETING</u>	<u>Chair</u>

END OF AGENDA

ITEM 6 - Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
<p>A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT</p>	<p>There are invoices and accounting records missing from the middle part of the year, and I must therefore conclude that the council has not met the requirements of this internal control objective.</p>	<p>Councillors were satisfied they saw invoices before approving payment, but invoices were not properly filled/stored. The new Clerk will be ensuring all invoices from 24/25 onwards are filed appropriately.</p>
<p>B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS</p>	<p>The External Auditor's Report has not been published on the council website and neither has the Notice of Conclusion of Audit. This is a breach of the statutory regulations – see section N of this report. I recommend that if the council is unable to locate the documents, it contacts the External Auditor to request the missing documents.</p> <p>There is a link on the Councillors page to the Register of Members Interests, although this does not correctly link to the District Council website and must be updated to ensure that all Councillor's Register of Members Interest Forms are accessible via the Parish Council website.</p> <p>I recommend the council consider the JPAG Practitioner's Guide recommendations regarding the use of email addresses for councillors.</p> <p>Although the minutes of the May 2023 meeting state that Standing Orders were adopted, they are not published on the council website. A review of policies on the council website shows the most recent version dated June 2020 and these are not the NALC current model version and contain out of date legislation. I recommend the council adopts the new NALC model version to ensure it is meeting its statutory responsibilities and the document must be published on the council website.</p> <p>The Financial Regulations are also missing from the council website, and although the Locum Clerk appears to have updated them, the new NALC model version released in May 2024 should now be used as a model going forward for review and the document must be published on the council website.</p> <p>The previous internal auditor highlighted that no VAT returns had been completed since February 2017. The council is allowed to reclaim VAT and should ensure that it backdates the returns as far as allowable (previous three years) to reclaim the money it is entitled to, and then establish a process going forward to regularly reclaim the VAT each year.</p>	<p>The Clerk will be contacting the External Auditors to request missing documents.</p> <p>The Councillor Register of Members Interest Forms can now be found on the Parish website and the link to the DC website has been removed.</p> <p>The Parish will be changing their website provider to HugoFox (work starting in June 2024) and will also be using their service to use gov.uk email addresses</p> <p>The Clerk will be updating all Parish Council policies (including Standing Orders) for approval at the July 2024 PC meeting and once approved will publish on the website.</p> <p>The Clerk will be including the new NALC Financial Regulations in the update of all policies at the July 2024 PC meeting and will also publish on the PC website.</p> <p>The Clerk will be re-claiming VAT for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.</p>

	The system noted above shows that detailed internal review has not taken place during the year and the council must ensure that processes are put in place to correct this.	The Clerk will be reclaiming VAT bi-annually from 2024/2025 onwards.
C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE	<p>There is no evidence of a council risk assessment being in place, with no information published on the council website. The council must have in place a risk assessment covering financial and operational risks, and this should be published on the council website. I must conclude that the council has inadequate risk management controls in place.</p> <p>Based on the year-end balances, the level of Fidelity Guarantee is insufficient, and appears to have been for several years based on the balances showing on previous AGARs. The council is recommended to ensure the Fidelity Guarantee is at least the highest level of balance held at any point during the year.</p>	<p>The Clerk will work with the Chair to produce a Risk Assessment for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting in July 2024.</p> <p>The Clerk has contacted the insurance brokers to raise the level of the Fidelity Guarantee to £500K.</p>
D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES	There is no evidence that regular reporting against budget took place during the financial year under review, although the Clerk has now established a process for reporting on a quarterly basis and I will be checking for reviews of this information in future minutes at the next internal audit.	The Clerk will be producing a quarterly budget monitoring report from 2024/2025 onwards
E. INCOME	Council is reminded that the hall hire fees should be reviewed annually and I will be checking for evidence of this in future minutes of meetings.	The next review of charges by the Comm Hall committee will be approved at the following PC meeting
G. PAYROLL	I reviewed the total figure being included within box 4 (staff costs) on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). This initially included locum Clerk costs and the Hall Manager, who operates as a contractor and is paid by invoice. Council is reminded that only salary payments, HMRC payments and pension contributions can be included within box 4, with other payments included within box 6.	Amended before publication and sending to External Auditor
H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS	The most recent additions had originally been included at the cost including VAT. The JPAG Practitioner's Guide provides clear guidance that assets should be recorded at cost price net of VAT.	Now amended
I. BANK AND CASH	<p>The Chair confirmed that bank reconciliations have been reviewed by the council periodically during the year, although this has been inconsistent. As the council's Financial Regulations are unclear on this requirement, there has been no breach in regulations, but I recommend the council adopt the new model version which includes the requirement for a minimum quarterly check of the reconciliations, with the bank reconciliation and bank statement signed, and this activity recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>The council holds accounts with Barclays, Lloyds and National Savings & Investments. At the end of the</p>	<p>From 24/25 onwards the PC will be approving bank reconciliations monthly at either a Finance Committee meeting or a full council meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk will be monitoring the Barclays bank account balance and once online access is available will transfer funds to the NSI bank account to ensure the balance is kept</p>












	<p>financial year, the balance on the Barclays account exceeds the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and the council should consider transferring funds to maximise the protection available to it.</p>	<p>under the £85K limit</p>
<p>J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS</p>	<p>The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts although there is a £1 rounding error which should be amended within box 6 to ensure the round figures accurately sum.</p> <p>Last year's comparatives initially supplied for the internal audit did not match the figures submitted for 2022/23, and care must be taken when completing the AGAR to ensure the figures are accurately recorded.</p>	<p>Amended before publication and sending to External Auditor</p> <p>Amended before publication and sending to External Auditor</p>
<p>L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION</p>	<p>From a review of the council's website, there is considerable data missing as I was only able to locate pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement) and page 5 (Accounting Statements) for 2020/21 and 2022/23, while there are no page 6 (External Auditor's Report and Certificate) on the website and therefore the council has not met the requirements of this internal control objective.</p> <p>This internal control objective carries forward annually, requiring the previous five years of information to be published and therefore the council must endeavour to locate the missing information and add it to the website as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The Clerk will look for these documents and approach the External Auditor for any that can't be found.</p> <p>The Clerk will look for these documents and approach the External Auditor for any that can't be found.</p>
<p>M. EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS</p>	<p>The proposed dates for 2023/24 initially included the inspection period beginning on Saturday 24 June 2024. The period is 30 consecutive working days, and therefore must be amended to begin on Monday 24 June 2024.</p>	<p>Amended before publication and sending to External Auditor</p>

<p>N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS</p>	<p>I was able to confirm that the Notice of Public Rights is published on the council website, but I was unable to locate either the External Auditor Report and Certificate or Notice of Conclusion of audit, and therefore the council has not met the requirements of this internal control objective.</p>	<p>Answered in Point B</p>
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ITEM 7 July 2024 Chq Payments

		JULY 2024 PAYMENTS			
Chq Date	Payee	Detail	Cheque No	Amount £	Sub-Total
08/07/24	Viking Office UK Ltd	Office supplies - files, envelopes, punched pockets, stamps	101951	94.98	
08/07/24	AES Alarms	Annual alarm monitoring	101952	302.26	
08/07/24	Scottish Power (village green)	10/03 to 11/06/2024	101953	189.00	
08/07/24	Mark Short	Comm Hall window cleaning	101954	70.00	
08/07/24	Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	Year end 2023/2024 Audit services	101955	426.66	
08/07/24	Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	Councillor training	101955	54.00	
08/07/24	Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd	Councillor/Clerk training	101955	108.00	588.66
08/07/24	West Sussex County Council	Clerk's Payroll, Empl NI & Pension May 2024	101956	3,336.83	
08/07/24	West Sussex County Council	Clerk's Payroll, Empl NI & Pension June 2024	101956	3,336.83	6,673.66
08/07/24	Savills (UK) Ltd	Rent for Westerton Playing Field	101957	100.00	
08/07/24	Christie Intruder Alarms Ltd	Fire extinguisher maintenance	101958	175.64	
08/07/24	Chris Maher	Hall Manager hours June 2024	101959	540.00	
08/07/24	Chris Maher	Bin bags for Comm Hall	101959	5.25	545.25
08/07/24	L Huntingford	Grass cutting Westhampnett & Westerton 13 & 26/6 24	101960	560.00	
08/07/24	SOS Storage	Container hire 01/07/24 to 28/07/2024	101961	52.56	
			TOTAL	9,352.01	

ITEM 8 – PREVIOUSLY APPROVED POLICES

-  01 Standing Orders
-  02 Councillor Code of Conduct
-  03 Councillor - Officer Protocol
-  04 Email & Internet Usage Policy
-  05 Grants-Policy
-  06 Recording-of-meetings-policy
-  07 WPC Complaints policy
-  08 WPC Freedom of information
-  09 WPC Information security incident pol..
-  10 WPC Lone working policy
-  11 WPC Media & communications policy